

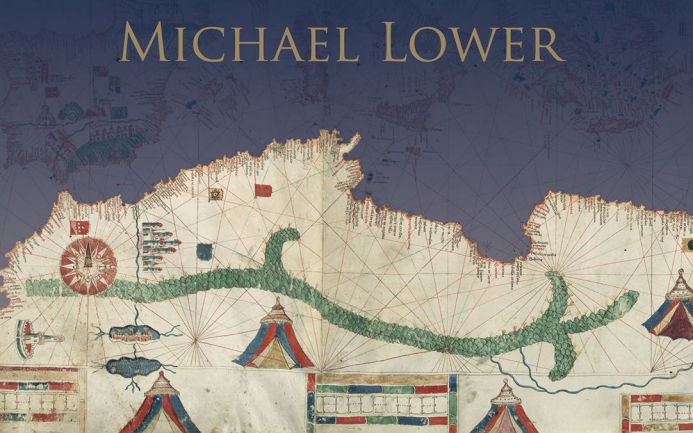
OXFORD

THE TUNIS CRUSADE OF 1270

A MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY



MICHAEL LOWER



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A Mediterranean History

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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For Lianna, Isaac, and Moe

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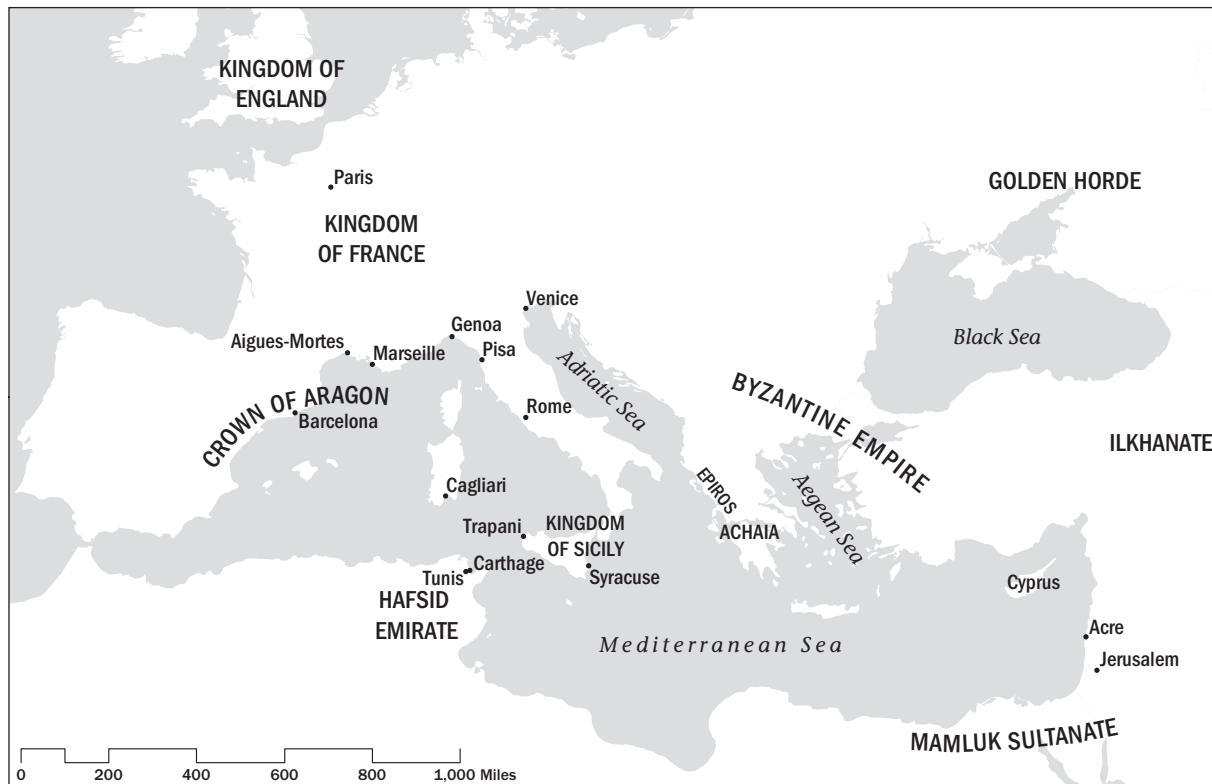
List of Abbreviations

<i>Annali Genovesi</i>	<i>Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de'suoi continuatori</i> , ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano and Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, 5 vols. Fonti per la storia d'Italia pubblicate dall'istituto storico Italiano, 11–14bis (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1890–1929).
Borghese	Gian Luca Borghese, <i>Carlo I d'Angiò e il Mediterraneo: Politica, diplomazia e commercio internazionale prima dei Vespri</i> (Rome: École française de Rome, 2008).
Brunschvig	Robert Brunschvig, <i>La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafsides, des origines à la fin du XVe siècle</i> . 2 vols (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1940–7).
Crawford	<i>The “Templar of Tyre”: Part III of the “Deeds of the Cypriots”</i> , ed. Paul Crawford (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003).
de Sacy	Silvestre de Sacy, “Mémoire sur le traité fait entre le roi de Tunis et Philippe-le-Hardi, en 1270, pour l'évacuation du territoire de Tunis par l'armée des croisés,” <i>Histoire et mémoires de l'institut royal de France, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i> 9 (1831): pp. 448–77.
“Documents divers”	Pierre Garrigou-Grandchamp (and Mohammed Talbi), “Documents divers relatifs à la croisade de Saint Louis contre Tunis (1270),” <i>Les cahiers de Tunisie</i> 25 (1977): pp. 245–82.
<i>L'Espagne catalane</i>	Charles-Emmanuel Dufourcq, <i>L'Espagne catalane et le Maghrib au XIII^e et XIV^e siècles: De la bataille de Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) à l'avènement du sultan mérinide Abou-l-Hasan (1331)</i> (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966).
Geoffrey of Beaulieu	Geoffrey of Beaulieu, <i>Vita Ludovici noni</i> . RHGF, vol. 20.
<i>Gesta Ludovici</i>	Guillaume of Nangis, <i>Gesta sanctae memoriae Ludovici regis Franciae</i> . RHGF, vol. 20.
Guillaume of Chartres	Guillaume of Chartres, <i>De vita et actibus inclytæ recordationis regis Francorum Ludovici et de miraculis quae ad eius sanctitatis declarationem contingerunt</i> . RHGF, vol. 20.

- Histoire des Berbères* Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale*, ed. and trans. William MacGuckin de Slane, 4 vols (Algiers: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1852–6).
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- Ibn al-Furat Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tarikh al-Duwal wa'l-Muluk of Ibn al-Furat*, ed. and trans. Ursula and Malcolm C. Lyons, historical introduction and notes by Jonathan Riley-Smith, 2 vols (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1971).
- Ibn Khaldun 'Abd al-Rahman b. Khaldun, *Kitab al-'ibar wa-diwan al-mubtada' wa-l-khabar fi ayyam al-'arab wa-l-'ajam wa-l-barbar wa-man 'asarahum min dhawi al-sultan al-akbar*, 7 vols (Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-Lubnani, 1956–61).
- Ibn al-Shamma' Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Shamma', *al-Adilla al-bayyina al-nuraniyya fi mafakhir al-dawla al-hafsiyya*, ed. al-Tahir al-Ma'muri (Tripoli: al-Dar al-'Arabiyya li-l-kitab, 1984).
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- Layettes* *Layettes du trésor des chartes*, ed. Alexandre Teulet et al. 5 vols (Paris: Henri Plon, 1863–1909).
- Lefevre Renato Lefevre, *La crociata di Tunisi del 1270 nei documenti del distrutto archivio angioino di Napoli* (Rome: Istituto Italo-Africano: Quaderni della rivista "Africa," 1977).
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- MGH SS *Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptores*. Ed. Georg H. Pertz et al., 32 vols (Hanover and Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1826–1934).
- Mollat Michel Mollat, “Le ‘passage’ de Saint Louis à Tunis: Sa place dans l’histoire des croisades,” *Revue d’histoire économique et sociale* 1 (1972): pp. 289–303.
- Ordonnances *Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race*, ed. Eusèbe Laurière et al., 21 vols (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1723–1849).
- Primat Primat, *Chronique de Primat, traduite par Jean du Vignay*. RHGF, vol. 23.
- Quatremère Al-Maqrizi, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks de l’Égypte*, trans. Étienne Quatremère, 2 vols (Paris: Oriental Translation Fund, 1837–45).
- RCA *I registri della cancellaria angioina ricostruiti da Riccardo Filangieri con la collaborazione degli archivisti napoletani*, ed. Riccardo Filangieri et al., 49 vols (Naples: Presso L’Accademia, 1950–2010).
- Registres de Clément IV *Les registres de Clément IV (1265–1268): Recueil des bulles de ce pape, publiées ou analysées d’après les manuscrits originaux des archives du Vatican*, ed. Édouard Jordan, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome, 2nd series (Paris: Thorin et Fils, 1893–1945).
- RHC Occ. *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens occidentaux*, 5 vols (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1841–1906).
- RHGF *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*. Ed. Martin Bouquet et al., 24 vols (Paris: Aux dépens des libraires associés, 1737–1904).
- RIS *Rerum Italicarum scriptores, nova series*, ed. Giosuè Carducci et al., 33 vols (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1921–).
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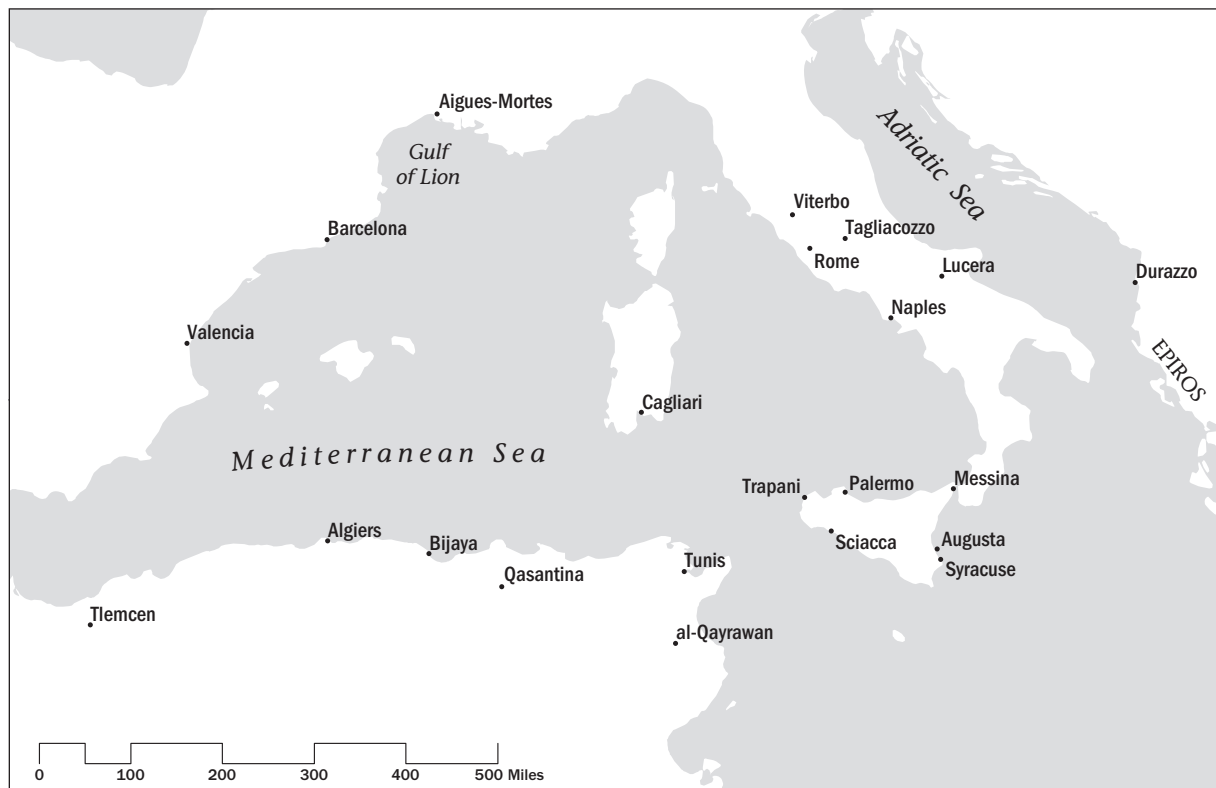
- Sanctity of Louis IX* *The Sanctity of Louis IX: Early Lives of Saint Louis by Geoffrey of Beaulieu and William of Chartres*, trans. Larry F. Field, edited and introduced by M. Cecilia Gaposchkin and Sean L. Field (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).
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- Traités* *Traité de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des chrétiens avec l’arabes de l’Afrique septentrionale au moyen âge*, ed. Louis de Mas Latrie (Paris: Henri Plon, 1866).
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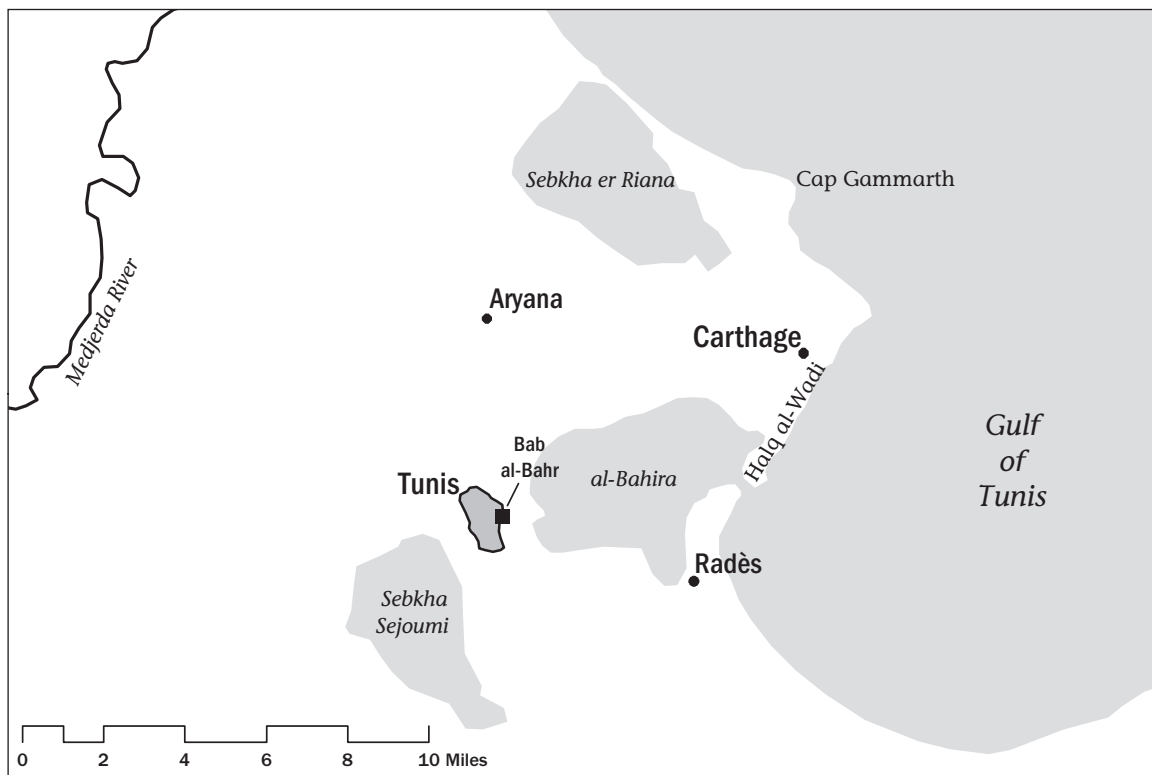
Map 1. The world of the Tunis Crusade



Map 2. Western Asia, c. 1270



Map 3. The central Mediterranean, c.1270



Map 4. Tunis and environs

Introduction

The Tunis Crusade of 1270 was the last of the great campaigns to win back the Holy Land for western Christendom. Fittingly enough, it never reached its final destination. Back when we used to number the crusades, it was known as the Eighth Crusade, the last on the list before the crusader states fell for good in 1291. The question about it has always been a simple one: why did it wind up attacking Tunis, a peaceful North African port city thousands of miles from the Holy Land, when it was clear to everyone that the crusader states of Syria were on the brink of collapse? Simple enough to ask, not so easy to answer: we still know precious little about how the Tunis Crusade brought the classic era of crusading to such an unexpected end.

This is hard for me to admit, because I have been working on this crusade for years. Part of the problem, I have belatedly realized, is that I was going about it the wrong way. Like most crusades historians, I was trained in European history. But the Tunis Crusade is not really a European story; it is a Mediterranean one. Opening up this larger perspective has involved rethinking how I study and teach the crusades. It has also required retraining in the academic discipline that shares (and sometimes contests) the study of the Mediterranean world with European history: Near Eastern Studies. Standing at the intersection of these two established bodies of scholarship, this book aims to contribute to both by opening up a new conversation about the place of crusading in medieval Mediterranean culture.

COMBINING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

For generations, historians studied the crusades from the crusaders' point of view. This was partly out of necessity, because of the technical and disciplinary obstacles that traditionally stood in the way of adopting a broader perspective. But it was partly out of choice as well. For many years, crusades history turned inward as scholars tried to understand how a holy war tradition emerged out of medieval European culture and then

came to influence that culture in profound ways. The results of this project have been impressive. We now know much more about the origins and consequences of crusading in medieval Europe. So much so, I believe, that the time is right to look outward again. With a new confidence, we can explore the crusades as a series of encounters between the Latin Christian world, its neighbors, and its internal minorities.¹

In this new kind of crusades history, European and Near Eastern sources can be brought together into productive dialogue. This approach differs not only from the traditional European emphasis but also from the pioneering work of scholars such as Carole Hillenbrand and Paul Cobb, who have tried to redress the imbalance in the scholarship by concentrating on the Islamic side of the crusades. Rather than shifting the focus from one singular perspective to another, I am aiming for a multiperspectival approach to the interreligious conflicts and collaborations of the crusader period.²

There were many sides to the crusades. To understand them better, we need to appreciate the viewpoints of all the major actors. None of the classic, numbered campaigns entailed a straightforward clash between Christians of the west and Muslims of the east. The people who became entangled in the Tunis Crusade came from every corner of the Mediterranean world and engaged in all manner of interactions within and across religious lines. Telling their stories—all of them—brings us closer to what it was like to live through these complex multilateral encounters.

The medieval Mediterranean was a crossroads for a host of multiethnic, multilingual, and internally diverse polities. Only centuries later, in a feat of academic gerrymandering that still structures our understanding of the period, would the region become the purview of two distinct disciplinary enterprises—European History and Near Eastern Studies. Restoring the lost connections between these fields is an essential component of a crusades historian's work today. Arabic is not usually considered a core research language in crusades scholarship, but it should be. Informed by

¹ Leading this inward turn was my wonderful research supervisor, the late Jonathan Riley-Smith. See, for example, his *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Other important examples of this influential trend include Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c.970–c.1130* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and, more recently, Nicholas Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps: The Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

² See Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Paul Cobb, *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

this more holistic approach, we can move toward a crusades history that is alive to interactions across frontiers of belief and belonging, that does not privilege European perspectives on these encounters, and that regards the Mediterranean less as a setting for one strand of historical experience than as a zone of dialogue among cultures.

THE CRUSADES AND THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

This methodological shift has consequences for how we understand the historical role of the crusades in the development of the medieval Mediterranean world. There are two schools of thought to bear in mind here. The first we can call “Mediterranean Studies,” which originates with the work of Fernand Braudel in the late 1940s.³ Scholars working in this tradition tend to argue that the Christians and Muslims who lived around the sea shared a common culture shaped by climate, geography, and agricultural practices, despite the religious differences that should have divided them. The second school we can call “clash of civilizations,” which is associated with Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis.⁴ Scholars in this tradition, by contrast, tend to see the religious divide between Islam and Christianity as sharp enough to be an endemic source of conflict. There are obvious differences between the two approaches—one privileges the natural environment and its power to shape human civilizations, while the other locates the wellsprings of human action and motivation in religious allegiance. But these differences should not obscure a common assumption they both share: religious differences, when vigorously maintained and defended, usually led to anxiety, violence, and instability.

The crusades seem to embody this shared assumption. They are a paradigmatic example of conflict rooted in aggressive assertions of religious difference. For Mediterraneanists, religious difference is something that had to be overcome for peaceful relations between faiths to take place. Productive exchanges could, and often did, occur when medieval Muslims, Christians, and Jews focused more on what brought them together (the common pursuit of material prosperity, love of learning

³ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (Paris: A. Colin, 1966); English translation: *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

and literature, shared environmental challenges) than on what divided them (Trinitarian doctrine, the status of Jesus). For the “clash of civilizations” school, by contrast, Mediterranean people were seldom able to set aside their differences in this way. They succumbed repeatedly to the destructive urges inherent in powerful religious identification, fueling the large-scale conflict that is supposed to have dominated international relations down to the present day.

These contrasting accounts of the Mediterranean, each grounded in a negative view of the role of religious difference, both express a powerful truth about the region’s past. On the one hand, the medieval Mediterranean was the site of great conflicts between Christians and Muslims—these are the crusades and the jihads that we all know about. On the other hand, it also witnessed the kind of ethnic and religious diversity that allowed flexible religious attitudes, hybrid personal identities, and complex networks of interaction to flourish—this is the Mediterranean recognizable to students of medieval economic and intellectual exchange. The problem is that these two defining features of Mediterranean history do not sit comfortably together. If we insist on seeing strong expressions of religious difference as inevitably leading to conflict, then we are left with the challenge of explaining how two seemingly irreconcilable systems of interreligious relations—one dedicated to confrontation along religious lines, the other to pragmatic accommodation across them—flourished at the same time.

In what follows, I propose an alternate way of understanding this Mediterranean paradox. I argue that under certain historical conditions, powerful assertions of religious difference, even in the form of crusade or jihad, could help to strengthen and stabilize relations across religious divides. Mediterranean diversity and religious warfare could coexist because in some crucial respects they were mutually reinforcing. The crusades did not stand apart from and in opposition to other, less violent forms of contact between faiths. Instead, they formed part of a larger system of relations that only becomes visible when all its components receive attention. That is why it is crucial to take into account all the actors in the crusades and all their interactions with one another—commercial, diplomatic, scholarly, missionary, artistic, and social. With this broader perspective in place, it becomes possible to situate the crusades in an alternate history of religious difference, one that explores not only its capacity for provoking violence but also its potential as a source of stability and cooperation in a pre-secular age. In this history, the forging of distinct confessional identities among Muslims, Christians, and Jews would be seen not as an impediment to the emergence of a shared Mediterranean culture and lifestyle, but rather as an integral feature of its creation.

The Tunis Crusade is the Mediterranean Paradox in microcosm. The modest body of scholarly literature on the expedition has tended to fall into two camps, which match the positions staked out in the larger debate over the nature of medieval Mediterranean culture. On the one hand, there is the “clash of civilizations” version of the campaign, which tells the story of King Louis IX of France’s (r. 1226–70) drive to Christianize the Islamic Mediterranean through a program of crusade and conversion that came to focus on Tunis and its emir Abu ‘Abd-Allah Muhammad al-Mustansir (r. 1249–77).⁵ On the other hand, there is the “Mediterranean Studies” version, which describes how Louis’s younger brother Charles of Anjou, king of Sicily (r. 1266–82), diverted his saintly sibling’s crusade from the Holy Land to North Africa in order to stabilize Sicilian–Tunisian relations after an unsettled period, maintain commercial contacts with Egypt, the presumed initial target of the expedition, and extract tribute payments from al-Mustansir.⁶ Just as in the larger debate over the Mediterranean, these alternatives are seen as mutually exclusive. The crusade was either a drive for souls or a drive for money, but it could not be both. It was either a campaign of elimination or an attempt at accommodation, but it could not be both. It was an episode in which religion mattered either very much or very little, but it could not be both. What we are left with are competing explanations that can be reduced to binaries: souls/money; confrontation/accommodation; spiritual/material.

These two ways of understanding the crusade, always presented as contradictory, are actually complementary. Louis and Charles both found what they wanted in Tunis: it was a place where Muslim souls could be won *and* Hafsid money could be had; where Latin Christian commercial interests *and* missionary initiatives could be advanced; and where methods of militant confrontation *and* conciliatory diplomacy could be tried. The key to understanding the Tunis Crusade, in other words, has been hiding in plain sight. It is Tunis itself, with its far-flung commercial engagements, ambiguous political status, and enduring centrality to Mediterranean networks of exchange.

These arguments build on a generation’s worth of path-breaking scholarship in the history of the crusades and the medieval Mediterranean. Three particularly important examples warrant explicit mention. David Nirenberg’s work on ritualized intercommunal violence in the fourteenth-century Crown of Aragon has influenced all subsequent scholarship on medieval interfaith relations in the western Mediterranean, and the present

⁵ See Sternfeld, Mollat, Longnon, and Étienne Delaruelle, “L’idée de croisade chez saint Louis,” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 61 (1960): pp. 241–57.

⁶ See Borghese.

work is no exception to this happy rule.⁷ Cemal Kafadar's revisionist account of the rise of the Ottomans has proven equally fundamental for the eastern Mediterranean. By breaking down overly schematic representations of the early Ottomans as either pragmatic plunderers or devout *ghazi* warriors, Kafadar opened the way toward more nuanced renderings of premodern interreligious encounters.⁸ But the most important model for the multiperspectival approach to crusades history that I am deploying here comes from Peter Jackson, who was combining European and Near Eastern-language sources with complete mastery long before "Mediterranean Studies" had gained currency as an academic field. His research on crusaders and Mongols richly illustrates the advantages to be gained from working across the fields of Near Eastern Studies and European History.⁹

THE TUNIS CRUSADE

The story of how the last of the canonical crusades found its way to Tunis begins with two sets of ambitious Mediterranean dynasts. We can think of them as matched pairs. Though all the dynasts employed a range of strategies to accomplish their aims, one pair was more committed to interreligious conflict, while the other was more open to negotiation and accommodation. These two styles of interreligious encounter came together with surprising results when the fortunes of the four princes became intertwined in the late 1260s. The opening chapters of the book are devoted to unpacking the richness and complexity of their interactions in the years leading up to the crusade. The final sections build on this narrative to suggest what the Tunis Crusade can teach us about crusading and medieval Mediterranean culture in the later thirteenth century.

LOUIS AND BAYBARS

Louis and Baybars, on first sight, do not seem to have a lot in common. King Louis IX of France was one of the greatest kings of the medieval west. A defining figure of medieval history, he presided over quintessential

⁷ David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁸ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁹ Among his many contributions, see Peter Jackson, "The Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260," *English Historical Review* 95 (1980): pp. 481–513; and Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005).

expressions of medieval European culture: cathedrals, universities, scholasticism, and, of course, crusades. In French history, the thirteenth century is known as the “*siècle de Saint Louis*”: the age of Saint Louis. He was powerful, wealthy, born into privilege, and famous for his Christian piety, so much so that he was canonized as a saint after his death.¹⁰ Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari was none of these things, at least at first. He was a Qipchaq Turk, born in the south Russian steppe. He had been taken captive as a youth and sold as a slave in Syria to an Egyptian emir who became his *mawla*, or owner. Baybars was a Mamluk, one of the thousands of slaves who were purchased, trained as elite soldiers, and converted to Islam in the early decades of the thirteenth century. From these humble beginnings, Baybars would rise to become sultan of Egypt and much of Syria, too.¹¹ Despite these differences, Louis and Baybars shared something important in common: a powerful commitment to religious confrontation.

For both of them, the coast of western Asia was a major concern. Louis and Baybars pursued political and ideological programs that made a confrontation between them over this region appear inevitable. Each, in fact, was committed to eliminating the presence of the other from it. For Baybars, the battle for Syria would bring religious legitimation to his fledgling regime and a bulwark against a powerful external threat, the Mongols. For Louis, it offered self-sanctification and the potential re-Christianization of sacred space. To prepare themselves and their people for the struggle, each embarked on elaborate efforts to eradicate internal dissent and difference. In both France and the Mamluk realm, religious minorities, perceived deviants, and violators of moral codes came in for increased scrutiny as the two men geared up for battle. Each tried to define the looming struggle in absolute terms, as a contest pitting a unified, purified community against a religious other.

CHARLES OF ANJOU AND AL-MUSTANSIR OF TUNIS

In the central Mediterranean, though, a relationship was developing that had the potential to send the crusade in an entirely different direction. This relationship also involved a linked pair of Mediterranean dynasts, one a Muslim, the other a Christian, and it also originated in conflict. In Sicily

¹⁰ The two classic biographies of Louis IX are Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); and Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

¹¹ The standard biography of Baybars is Thorau.

and Tunisia, however, the logic of elimination and eradication that drove Baybars and Louis quickly gave way to an alternative dynamic centered on exchange and negotiation across religious frontiers. On the northern shore of the central Mediterranean, there was Charles of Anjou. He was Louis IX's youngest brother. He had started out as a junior member of the Capetian house that ruled the kingdom of France, but in 1266 he had become a king in his own right when he conquered Sicily. Louis expected Charles to join his new crusade, but Charles was non-committal. He wanted to engage in sibling rivalry on more equal terms now that he was a king. In fact, he saw Sicily as the linchpin of an Angevin realm in the Mediterranean, which could extend eastward toward Byzantium and westward toward Sardinia, Provence, and the Iberian Peninsula. There was only one problem with the plan: the linchpin itself, Sicily, was not secure, because the previous regime was agitating to win it back, and it seemed to be gaining a lot of support from Tunis, just 40 miles across the Mediterranean to the south.¹²

Tunis was ruled by an emir, Abu 'Abd-Allah Muhammad al-Mustansir.¹³ He belonged to the Hafsid dynasty, which had only recently established itself as an independent power. Al-Mustansir had enjoyed stable relations with the previous rulers of Sicily and was concerned that Charles's conquest would disrupt them. For economic and geographical reasons, Sicily and Tunis had entangled histories in the Middle Ages. In the ninth century, Muslim adventurers from Tunisia had conquered much of Sicily; in the twelfth, Christian adventurers from Sicily had conquered a number of ports along the North African coast. By the thirteenth, there had been a certain degree of religious and ethnic consolidation in both regions, but economic ties between them remained strong. Al-Mustansir needed wheat from Sicily to feed his people; Charles needed the gold that came the other way to pay off the debts he had run up while conquering Sicily. How would this strategic interdependence work itself out? Would Charles and al-Mustansir be partners, or would they wage a zero-sum struggle to control the central Mediterranean? When al-Mustansir sponsored an expeditionary force that landed on the coast of Sicily in the fall of 1267, it looked as if conflict would prevail. As it turned out, this was really the opening salvo in a negotiation that would extend throughout the course of the Tunis Crusade.

¹² For biographical studies of Charles of Anjou, see Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship, and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman, 1998); and Peter Herde, *Karl I von Anjou* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1979).

¹³ There is no biography of al-Mustansir of Tunis. Good accounts of his career can be found in Brunschvig, vol. 1: pp. 39–70; and Roughi, pp. 34–6.

THE GLOBAL SCALE OF CONFLICT AND COLLABORATION IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

As central as they were to the story, the crusade was not just about Capetian France, Angevin Sicily, Hafsid Tunisia, and Mamluk Egypt. It was also about Almohad Morocco, al-Andalus, Genoa, Venice, Pisa, the Crown of Aragon, the kingdoms of Castile and England, the Mongol states, Cilician Armenia, and Byzantium. It was not just about Muslims and Christians. It was also about Jews, Mongol shamanists, Latin Christians, heretical Latin Christians, Nestorian, eastern Orthodox, and Syrian Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shi'i Muslims, Shi'i Isma'ili Muslims, Shi'i Isma'ili Nizari Muslims, "Almohad" Muslims (who affirmed the coming of the Mahdi) and more. The Tunis Crusade was globalized in conception and execution. Despite living thousands of miles apart in an era of relatively primitive means of transport and communication, English and Mongol princes formed alliances against common enemies without a second thought. French crusaders believed a strike against Tunis could help the crusader states of the Holy Land, halfway across the Mediterranean, while the Mamluks regarded diplomacy with Angevin Sicily as essential to their interests not only in the eastern Mediterranean but also around the Black Sea. The Tunis Crusade unfolded against a backdrop of seemingly limitless diplomatic and military possibilities.

The key factor here was the rise of the Mongols, whose incursions into western Asia and eastern Europe remade the political maps of both regions in the early and middle decades of the thirteenth century and opened up a playing field for the pursuit of political ambitions that ran from England to the borders of China. The Mongol conquests had important religious as well as political implications. When they first arrived on the scene, the Mongols were not monotheists in the sense that any contemporary Muslim, Jew or Christian would have understood. They practiced forms of shamanism that allowed for religious syncretism. They encouraged the religious officials of other faiths to pray for the success of their rulers, all the while cheerfully overturning established religious hierarchies wherever they went. While Mongol leaders were uncompromising in early encounters with the regimes of the Islamic Near East and western Christendom, their religious attitudes shifted rapidly over the final decades of the thirteenth century. Some key figures began to raise the possibility of conversion when negotiating with the religious representatives of other faiths, while others actually converted, embracing Islam and later Buddhism. The Tunis Crusade took place in the middle of this volatile period of religious transition.

THE TWO FACES OF THE MEDIEVAL
MEDITERRANEAN

The Tunis Crusade was a fierce war between Christians and Muslims. It brought devastation, disease, and death to many. It was also a negotiation: over money, certainly, but over identity and belonging, too. These two modes of interreligious interaction—the conflictual and the collaborative—became entangled over the course of the campaign. Pragmatism never wholly triumphed over idealism; an eliminationist ideology never entirely overcame an accommodationist stance. Instead, the two systems combined in a classic Mediterranean synthesis.

Out of this potent mix something unexpected emerged: not chaos, not disorder, but new contacts, new relationships, and new alliances, many of them built on a mutual recognition of difference. The Tunis Crusade was not an unheralded irruption into a Mediterranean world of religious pluralism, many kinds of diversity, and flexible allegiances. It fitted comfortably into that diverse environment and actually helped to produce some of its characteristic cultural expressions. Religious conflict and cultural unity should not be seen as hallmarks of two irreconcilable visions of the medieval Mediterranean world. As we shall see, they were both present in the age of the last European crusader king, coexisting in a dynamic, historically contingent relationship.

1

Baybars, Louis IX, and the Battle for Syria

MANSURA: FEBRUARY 8, 1250

The origins of the Tunis Crusade lie in a battle fought between French crusaders and Egyptian forces in and around Mansura, a small town in the Nile Delta, in the early winter of 1250. The leader of the crusaders was King Louis IX of France, who was one of the most powerful monarchs in western Christendom. Even though he was 35 years old in 1250, a husband and a father, the Egyptian campaign represented a coming-of-age moment for him.¹ Succeeding to the throne as a youth of 12, Louis had become accustomed to ruling in close collaboration with his mother, Blanche of Castile. Now Blanche was home in Paris, serving as his regent, and he was in command of what was probably the best organized and best funded crusade that had yet been launched, an expedition that had been four years in the planning. Following a halt on Cyprus, Louis and his men had landed outside Damietta, a port city that guarded an entrance to the Nile, in June 1249. To their surprise, they occupied the city without encountering significant resistance. Then, after a long wait for more reinforcements to arrive from overseas, the crusaders headed up the Nile in late November. Their goal was Cairo, the capital of the Ayyubid confederation that ruled not only Egypt but also much of Syria and the Holy Land, including, since 1244, Jerusalem. The crusader army made slow progress and eventually ground to a halt before a tributary of the Nile called the Bahr al-Saghir. On the other side of the river stood Mansura, a fortified settlement that had been built specifically to stop an army invading from the coast. It was here that the main body of Egyptian troops regrouped to resist the crusaders. Most of the army established itself in a camp outside the town proper, near the Bahr al-Saghir, while some elite troops remained within the walls of Mansura.²

¹ William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 7–13.

² The standard narrative for the first phase of the campaign remains Strayer, pp. 487–518.

One of the officers inside Mansura was a 21-year-old Qipchaq Turk named Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari. Captured in the south Russian steppe as a youth, Baybars had been sold to an Ayyubid emir in the northern Syrian city of Hama.³ In 1246, Baybars caught the attention of the authorities in Cairo and joined the most prestigious Mamluk regiment, the Bahriyya. This regiment, usually housed on an island in the Nile (Bahriyya means “river-y”), served as the personal bodyguard of the Ayyubid sultan.⁴ The Bahri Mamluks had played no part in the fiasco at Damietta and were now being counted on to hold their nerve as the crusaders searched for a way to cross the Bahr al-Saghir and continue their march on Cairo.

After several unsuccessful attempts to dam the tributary, Louis paid a local Bedouin 500 bezants to reveal the location of a nearby ford. At dawn on February 8, 1250, Louis's brother Robert of Artois and his men rode their horses through the shallow waters of the crossing. Meeting no resistance on the opposite bank, they charged into the Egyptian camp and took it by surprise. They killed the commander as he rose from his morning bath and slaughtered many of the ordinary soldiers. The ford way was now clear for the crusader infantry to cross, but rather than holding his position to screen the infantry advance Robert of Artois continued his charge into Mansura proper. He was not aware that the Bahri Mamluks, along with another elite regiment, the *jamdariyya*, were garrisoned here, not in the camp closer to the river. The Mamluks, with Baybars among them, engaged the vanguard and quickly got the better of the fighting. The crusaders' horses were tired and found it hard to maneuver in the narrow streets of the town. The Mamluks annihilated the entire vanguard, including Robert of Artois. For the chronicler Ibn Wasil, the victory represented a turning point: “This was the first battle in which the Turkish lions were victorious over the polytheist dogs.”⁵

Louis and the rest of his men were eventually able to cross the ford and fight their way to the Egyptian camp, where they slept that night after the Egyptian troops withdrew into Mansura. It was a pyrrhic victory. The crusaders had lost a significant proportion of their effective fighting force in the streets of Mansura. They could not advance further up the Nile, while the rotting corpses that lay strewn about the old Egyptian

³ Thorau, p. 29.

⁴ For the origins of the Bahriyya, see Linda Northrup, “The Bahri Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1390,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M. W. Daly and Carl F. Petry, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 1: pp. 244–50.

⁵ Joinville, pp. 274–93 (Smith, pp. 199–207); Ibn Wasil, p. 57 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 145).

camp and in the waters of the Bahr al-Saghir spread disease and made it dangerous to stay where they were. Food became scarce once the Egyptians blockaded the Nile and prevented the crusaders from receiving supplies from Damietta. After hesitating for several weeks, Louis ordered the withdrawal downstream toward the coast. Encumbered by the ill and wounded, the army moved slowly. Near Faraskur, the Egyptians, with Baybars and the Bahri again heavily involved, forced Louis and his men to surrender.⁶

The encounter between Louis and Baybars at Mansura transformed the fortunes of both men. Baybars, the former slave who had distinguished himself in battle against the infidel, would become sultan within a decade. Once in power, he fought to confirm the verdict of Mansura by turning Egypt and Syria into a citadel of Islam, bordered by the Mediterranean in the west and the Euphrates in the east. Louis, the great king who seemed poised to regain much of those lands for Christendom, was instead escorted in shackles to the former house of an Ayyubid chancery official.⁷ Dramatizing the humiliation of his captivity, the king's biographers would liken the house to the slave quarters where the Israelites had lived out their bondage under pharaoh.⁸ Once he had returned to France, Louis would seek to reverse what he saw as the harsh but just judgment that God had handed down in the delta. He would transform himself into a king who was so pure in God's sight, and whose realm was so aligned with the divine plan for humankind, that Christ would someday allow him to redeem himself by restoring the Holy Land to Latin Christianity.

BAYBARS

Baybars's arrival in Cairo in 1246 came amid a wave of Mamluk recruitment in the Ayyubid realms of Egypt and Syria. Mamluk soldiers had been fighting in Near Eastern armies since the ninth century, but pressures of supply and demand expanded the market for their services in the early decades of the thirteenth. On the supply side, the Mongol drive westward across Eurasia, begun by Ghengis Khan in the early 1200s, displaced many Turkic-speaking peoples. Among these were the Qipchaqs, who resettled in the region north of the Caspian Sea. By the early 1240s, the Mongols had tracked them down there and defeated them again, taking many

⁶ Joinville, pp. 293–339 (Smith, pp. 208–27); Ibn Wasil, pp. 69–74 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 148–50).

⁷ Ibn Wasil, p. 69 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 148).

⁸ Guillaume of Chartres, p. 30 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 135).

captives in the process. As a result, the slave markets around the Black Sea and in northern Syria and Cairo were swamped with Qipchaqs who would come to form the core of many Mamluk regiments. In one of the many ironies of this historical period, the Mongols had unwittingly helped to bring into being the armies that would defeat them in Syria just a few decades later.⁹

Driving demand for these slave soldiers was factionalism within the Ayyubid confederation. The Ayyubids were the successors to Saladin, the famous sultan who had suppressed the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt, brought much of Muslim Syria under his control, and reduced the Frankish crusader states to a narrow strip along the Mediterranean coast by his death in 1193. The Franks were able to preserve these holdings, and even expand them over the next several decades, largely because Saladin's successors were more concerned with internal rivalries than with defeating the crusader states.¹⁰ As large populations of Turkish nomads appeared on the slave market, the Ayyubids turned to them as vital tools in their domestic struggles. These nomads were prized for their ability to fight with bow and arrow on horseback. This skill was deeply ingrained in the culture of the steppe lands from which they had originally come, but it could not be taught easily to settled populations. Just as important, the nomads were thought to be loyal since they owed their lives to the masters they served. This was a desirable quality to possess in a world of shifting allegiances.

One of the more successful Ayyubid dynasts—and one whose policies in many ways anticipated those of his more famous follower—was Baybars's master al-Salih Ayyub (b. 1206–7), a grandnephew of Saladin. On his father's death in 1238, al-Salih had inherited the Jazira, the most

⁹ Reuven Amitai, "The Early Mamluks and the End of the Crusader Presence in Syria (1250–1291)," in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 325–6; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), p. 39; Paul M. Cobb, *The Race for Paradise: An Islamic History of the Crusades* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 220. For the Mamluk concept in general, see David Ayalon, *Le phénomène mamelouk dans l'Orient islamique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996); and Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks XIIIe–XVI siècle: Une expérience du pouvoir dans l'Islam medieval* (Paris: Seuil, 2014). For its Abbasid roots, see David Ayalon, "The Military Reforms of Caliph al-Mu'tasim: Their Background and Consequences," in *his Islam and the Abode of War: Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries* (Variorum Collected Studies, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 1994), pp. 1–39; and Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 118–37.

¹⁰ A recent overview of the Ayyubid confederation is Paul A. Blaum, "Eagles in the Sun: The Ayyubids after Saladin," *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 13 (1999): pp. 105–80. The classic study remains R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977).

remote Ayyubid province. From this Mesopotamian outpost, al-Salih launched a dizzying sequence of campaigns, intrigues, and maneuvers that within two years had brought him to power in Cairo, the greatest Ayyubid prize of all.¹¹ Along the way, he became known for his reliance on Mamluks. As Ibn Wasil reported, "He bought more Turkish mamluks than had any other member of his family, until they became the major part of his army."¹²

Al-Salih Ayyub's creation of a Mamluk military elite in Cairo would eventually undermine the dynastic project it was meant to preserve. In the short term, though, it enabled him to consolidate his position in Egypt and even compete for control of Ayyubid holdings in Syria. He occupied Damascus in 1245 and by the end of the decade his only significant Ayyubid rival in the north was al-Nasir Yusuf, who ruled a lordship centered on Aleppo. When al-Nasir seized Hims from him in 1248, he mounted a campaign to retake the northern Syrian city. Too ill to oversee the siege personally, he stayed behind in Damascus. It was here that news reached him of Louis IX's invasion of Egypt. Calling off the siege of Hims, he arranged a truce with al-Nasir and tried to hurry home. He had to be carried in a litter because he was no longer fit to ride.¹³

On May 17, 1249, al-Salih reached Mansura and set up his military headquarters to oversee the defense of Damietta and oppose a crusader advance up the Nile. Unable to prevent the loss of the port three weeks later, al-Salih died on November 22, 1249, leaving a power vacuum behind him as the campaign against the French reached a crisis point. Rather than risk an open transfer of power, al-Salih's widow, Shajar al-Durr (Tree of Pearls) kept his death a secret. Only revealing the truth to two trusted army commanders, she dispatched messengers to Hisn Kayfa, in Mesopotamia, to fetch her late husband's son, al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Ghiyath al-Din Turan Shah, who was serving as governor there in deep exile from the royal court. Though some suspected that al-Salih was no longer alive, Shajar al-Durr continued to have orders issued in the late sultan's name until Turan Shah reached Mansura on February 25, 1250.¹⁴

¹¹ Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and Its Consequences* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 165–73; Peter Jackson, "The Crusades of 1239–41 and Their Aftermath," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50 (1987): pp. 32–62.

¹² Ibn Wasil, p. 19 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 134); Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluks' Ascent to Power in Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990): pp. 122–7.

¹³ Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (Shams al-Din Abu al-Muzaffar Yusuf b. Qizughli), *Mir'at al-zaman fi ta'rikh al-a'yan*, vol. 8/2 (Hyderabad: Matba'at Majlis Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyya, 1951–2), pp. 772–4 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 154).

¹⁴ Ibn Wasil, pp. 36–64 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 135–46).

The new sultan arrived to find the situation transformed by the Egyptian victory over the crusaders earlier in the month. Even so, he was unhappy to learn that the treasury had been emptied in the struggle. He had already spent heavily gaining the favor of his father's supporters in Damascus on the way down to Egypt and he was not sure where he was going to find the money to win over the Mamluks of Cairo. He did himself no favors with several clumsy attempts at fundraising; he offended Shajar al-Durr, for example, by demanding that she hand over her jewelry. Besides his financial troubles, Turan Shah was also worried about the newfound prominence of the Bahri Mamluks after their victory at Mansura. Lacking money to buy their support, he chose instead to replace them with the Mamluks who had come down with him from Hisn Kayfa. Turan Shah's contempt for the Bahri was palpable. He avoided their company except for public meals and in the evenings after a few drinks he would chop off the tops of candles with a sword while calling out the names of the Bahri officers he wanted to kill.¹⁵

But it was hard for Turan Shah to act on these violent fantasies while the crusaders were still in the delta and in possession of Damietta. Under these circumstances, he needed all the experienced soldiers he could get. When the crusaders fell into his hands in April, he became a much greater threat to the Bahri. Rather than attempt to retake Damietta, he could now negotiate with Louis IX from a position of strength. This meant that he would not need the Bahri for the investment of the city. Moreover, any ransom money that the French might pay to secure their release would be his to keep, as opposed to the plunder that might be gained from reconquering Damietta, which would have to be shared out among the troops. With both sides motivated to do a deal, an agreement was quickly reached. Louis would return Damietta to secure the release of his own person and would pay an indemnity of 400,000 *livres tournois* (*l.t.*) to free the rest of his army.¹⁶ With the crusader threat eliminated and the promise of a financial windfall on the horizon, Turan Shah was now ready to move against his father's Mamluks.

They never gave him the chance. On May 2, 1250, Baybars entered the tent where Turan Shah was finishing up a meal with his emirs and slashed at his head with a sword. Turan Shah raised his hand and deflected the blow; Baybars dropped the sword and ran away. Turan Shah then retreated to the top of a wooden tower he had constructed next to the dining pavilion. Some Bahri surrounded the tower and shouted for him to

¹⁵ Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mir'at al-zaman*, vol. 8/2: pp. 774–7, 781–3 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 158, 161); Ibn Wasil, p. 73 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 150); *Seventh Crusade*, p. 126.

¹⁶ Joinville, p. 354 (Smith, p. 234).

come down. He refused, until they threatened to set it on fire. Back on the ground, he begged for mercy and promised the financial rewards he had so far withheld from them. At this point, Baybars charged at him again with a raised sword and Turan Shah ran for the Nile, seeking the safety of some galleys that were moored nearby. He was wading through the water toward them when Baybars caught up with him and cut him down.¹⁷

Two days later, the leading Mamluks gathered to choose a successor. They turned to al-Salih Ayyub's widow, Shajar al-Durr. She was very much one of them, sharing their servile origins and Inner Asian Turkish heritage, and she was certainly one of the main ringleaders in the coup. Given how unhappy the conspirators were about not sharing in the spoils of the crusader defeat, it was no surprise that she confirmed the agreement that Louis had made with Turan Shah. The king paid over half the ransom—200,000 *l.t.* (400,000 bezants)—and sailed for Acre.

Though welcome in many respects, Louis's exit had one downside for the newly founded Mamluk coalition. It allowed latent tensions within the ruling group to bubble to the surface. The virtually unprecedented accession of a female ruler exacerbated the situation, providing a ready-made excuse for pretenders to challenge Shajar al-Durr's regime. The early 1250s saw heavy factional infighting on two fronts, as the leading Mamluks jostled among themselves while confronting Ayyubid holdouts in Syria.

At first, Baybars and the Bahri regiment fared badly in these power struggles. Baybars and about 700 of his fellow Bahri had to flee Cairo in 1254 and would pass the next five years in exile in Syria.¹⁸ They would not return to Egypt until 1259, under the impetus of a massive external threat.

By the 1250s, the Mongols had conquered an empire that ran from Korea in the east to the borders of Hungary and Poland in the west. Their military success was rooted in the nomadic culture of their steppe homeland. Many Mongols were nomadic pastoralists. They reared cattle, sheep, goats, and especially horses and migrated seasonally from one pastureland to another. As a result, they could operate with extreme mobility in warfare and were proverbially gifted mounted archers, traits they shared with other nomadic peoples of the steppe, such as the Qipchaq Turks who provided recruits for the Mamluks. Not all Mongols were pastoral nomads, however. Some were forest dwellers, living off hunting and fishing, while others were settled farmers. The Mongol empire would forge these different constituencies into a powerful whole by dominating

¹⁷ Ibn Wasil, pp. 74–7 (*Seventh Crusade*, pp. 151–2); Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'at al-zaman*, vol. 8/2: pp. 781–3 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 161); Joinville, pp. 347–52 (Smith, pp. 231–3); Thorau, pp. 38–9.

¹⁸ Thorau, pp. 51–7; Amitai, "The Early Mamluks," pp. 326–8.

trade routes and extracting tribute from sedentary neighbors. As the empire took shape, a full-blown ideology of world domination emerged. The Mongols came to believe that they had a divine mission to unite the world under their rule. This led to a rather uncomplicated view of international relations: the world had been given to the Mongols by the eternal heaven (Tenggeri), and all other rulers—whether they realized it or not—were their subjects. Therefore, the only way to secure peace was to submit to an approaching Mongol army; to resist was to rebel and invite destruction.¹⁹

As of the early 1250s, Islamic western Asia remained outside the Mongol ambit. The *qaghan* (Great Khan) Möngke decided to rectify this by organizing an invasion in 1252.²⁰ Under the command of his brother Hülegü, an expeditionary force set out for Iran. Its first targets were the strongholds of the Nizari Ismaʿili (often known as the Assassins) to the north of the country. Although the Nizaris had survived in northern Iran for generations, Hülegü's army had more or less wiped them out by the end of 1256. Heading westward, the Mongols made next for Baghdad, the home of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿsim bi'llah. Like many of his immediate predecessors, al-Mustaʿsim did not exercise in reality the vast spiritual and temporal authority that his caliphal title conferred on him in theory. He did not actually control much more than Baghdad and its surroundings and was unable to muster strong resistance when the Mongol army placed the city under siege in mid-January 1258. Less than a month later, Baghdad belonged to the Mongols. They brutally sacked the city and, on Hülegü's orders, executed al-Mustaʿsim. Showing consideration for his rank, they wrapped him in a carpet and trampled him to death—to avoid the spilling of royal blood.

In early 1260, Hülegü and his forces advanced into northern Syria. They besieged Aleppo and took the city after a week of hard fighting, massacring the Ayyubid garrison. The nominal ruler of the city, al-Nasir Yusuf, was absent. He had set up camp with the bulk of his army outside Damascus. Unwilling to risk a battle, he had negotiated off and on with Hülegü as the Mongol forces rumbled their way toward Syria, to no

¹⁹ Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 31–49; Beatrice Forbes Manz, “The Rule of the Infidels: The Mongols and the Islamic World,” *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Michael Cook, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 128–37. For the development of the Mongol ideology of world empire, see Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 37–55.

²⁰ On the Mongol invasion of Syria, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26–35; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 115–19; Manz, “Rule of the Infidels,” pp. 142–5.

noticeable effect. Other regional powers quickly submitted to the Mongol invaders. King Hethum of Lesser Armenia had become a Mongol tributary, as had his ally Bohemond VI, prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli. Both, in fact, had helped besiege Aleppo. When al-Nasir learned of the fall of Aleppo, he fled the camp outside Damascus and headed south, leaving the city to its fate. Abandoned by their ruler, the city elders entered into negotiations with Hülegü to surrender. His leading general, Kitbuqa, entered Damascus in triumph on March 2.

By that time, it is likely that Baybars had already left the Ayyubid military camp outside Damascus and made his way to Gaza. Unlike al-Nasir Yusuf, he was not fleeing the Mongols. Quite the opposite, in fact: Baybars was moving south to carry on the resistance against them. Over the previous months he had tried to persuade al-Nasir Yusuf to confront Hülegü. Faced with continued inaction, Baybars had then involved himself in a plot to oust al-Nasir Yusuf from the command of the Ayyubid army. It was the failure of that plot that drove Baybars to a desperate but likely unavoidable gamble. The Mongols had conquered much of Islamic Syria and were now setting their sights on Egypt. To prevent them from eliminating the entire theater of his political ambitions, Baybars entered into negotiations to reconcile with the Mamluk regime in Cairo.²¹

Under normal circumstances, these negotiations would not have been easy. The Mamluk sultan of Cairo was now Sayf al-Din Qutuz, who had personally carried out a political assassination that had sparked the exodus of Baybars and his companions out of Egypt in 1254. But as both sides were well aware, these were not normal circumstances, and an alliance of convenience was soon struck. Baybars and Qutuz certainly agreed on one thing: only a military confrontation would see off the Mongols now. When Mongol envoys from Hülegü delivered an ultimatum to Qutuz in the late spring of 1260, Qutuz listened to what they had to say and then had them cut in half.²² The fight was on.

As Qutuz prepared his army, he received encouraging news: Hülegü had withdrawn from Syria with most of his army, leaving behind his general Kitbuqa with a rump force of about 10,000 fighters. Hülegü was headed east, possibly to stand for the succession to the *qaghan* Möngke, who had died in August 1259. In late July 1260, Qutuz and the Mamluk army marched out of Cairo, seeking battle with the now much reduced

²¹ Humphreys, *Ayyubids of Damascus*, p. 338; Thorau, pp. 65–70.

²² Al-Maqrizi, vol. 1: pp. 427–8 (English translation: Bernard Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1974), vol. 1: pp. 84–6.

Mongol forces. The most sensible route north lay along the Mediterranean coast, where they could avoid some of the summer heat and have access to fresh water. Qutuz sent envoys to Acre to secure permission to pass through the kingdom of Acre.

The Frankish barons debated long and hard over what role they should play in the looming Mamluk–Mongol showdown.²³ Should they form an alliance with the Mamluks, or should they join forces with the Mongols, who were rumored to harbor pro-Christian sympathies? (Kitbuqa's wife, Doquz Khatun, was known to be a Nestorian Christian, for example.) There were risks involved in both choices. If they fought alongside the Mamluks, they might sustain losses to their armed forces, which would leave them vulnerable if Qutuz later turned against them. On the other hand, the idea of allying with the Mongols was a something of a nonsense at that time. One did not form alliances with Mongols; one gratefully submitted to them or faced destruction. In the end, the Franks chose a third way. They allowed the Mamluks to cross through their territory, provided them with supplies, and even permitted them to camp under the walls of Acre for three days before Qutuz turned inland in search of Kitbuqa. In this way, they preserved their limited military strength, allowed Qutuz to fight their battle for them, and at least gave themselves the chance of maintaining their independence from Mongol rule.

With Baybars leading the vanguard, the Mamluk army marched south-east into the Galilee. Kitbuqa did not try to avoid battle. He brought his army to the plain north of the Gilboa Mountains, where 'Ayn Jalut (the Spring of Goliath) provided fresh water. On September 3, 1260, the two armies fought a ferocious battle there. The Mamluks gained the advantage when the Ayyubid ruler of Hims, an erstwhile Mongol client, betrayed Kitbuqa at a critical juncture. Kitbuqa was killed in the fighting and the Mongols withdrew, first from the battlefield, then from Syria altogether.²⁴

The battle of 'Ayn Jalut brought together two armies, and really two peoples, who fought and lived in similar ways. Steppe nomads and former steppe nomads, trained from youth in the intricacies of mounted archery combat, confronted each other on a battlefield thousands of miles from their ancestral homelands, with the future of the Middle East at stake. For Abu Shama (d. 1268), a scholar from Damascus, that similarity was the key to the Mamluk victory. The Mongols had finally, and quite

²³ Peter Jackson, "The Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260," *English Historical Review* 95 (1980): pp. 503–7.

²⁴ Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "'Ayn Jalut Revisted," *Tarih* 2 (1992): pp. 119–50; John M. Smith, "'Ayn Jalut: Mamluk Success or Mongol Failure," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44 (1984): pp. 307–45.

literally, met their match: "To everything," he observed, "there is a pest of its own kind."²⁵

The confrontation is remarkable in another respect too. In an era when armies went out of their way to avoid large set-piece battles, and when those few that did take place often ended indecisively, here was a battle that had a momentous impact on the history of the Middle East. It destroyed the Mongols' reputation for invincibility, halted their westward advance toward Egypt and North Africa, conferred prestige on the Mamluk victors, and accelerated the Islamization of the region. More immediately, it allowed the Mamluks to extend their rule into Syria with relative ease in the fall of 1260, because the Mongols had already swept away the Ayyubid regimes that had previously contested Mamluk claims in the region. Al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo was gone; a Mongol patrol had captured him not long after his flight from Damascus and brought him to Hülegü, who had him executed as soon as he found out what had happened at 'Ayn Jalut.²⁶ As a result, Sultan Qutuz had no difficulty occupying Damascus and placing it under a Mamluk governor in September 1260. By the time Qutuz set out for Cairo in October, the outlines of a Mamluk realm that united Syria and Egypt were clearly visible.

If Qutuz could see the potential for creating a large Mamluk state in the wake of the Mongol withdrawal from Syria, so too could other prominent emirs in the army. His relations with the Bahri remained poor; old grudges had not been forgotten. As the army approached al-Salihiyya en route to Gaza, Qutuz spotted a hare and rode off to course it. Several leading Mamluks followed him, among them Baybars. After the hare was caught, they struck the sultan down with swords and possibly arrows. In the meeting of emirs that immediately followed Qutuz's assassination, the issue of who had dealt the fatal blow loomed large. One emir argued that because Qutuz did not have a son to succeed him, the sultanate should fall to the man who murdered him. With that, Baybars stood up and said that he was the killer. After promising to compensate the emirs who had felt hard done by under Qutuz, he received oaths of allegiance from everyone at the meeting. Without waiting to tell the rest of the army what had happened, he rushed off to Cairo to secure the capital in a bid to make his election as sultan a fait accompli.²⁷

²⁵ Shihab al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. Isma'il Abu Shama, *Tarajim rijal-al-qarnayn al-sadis wa-l-sabi' al-ma'ruf bi-l-dhayl 'ala al-rawdatayn*, ed. Muhammad al-Kawthari (Cairo: Maktab Nashr al-Thiqafa al-Islamiyya, 1947), p. 208; cited and translated in Amitai, "The Early Mamluks," p. 330.

²⁶ Jackson, "Crisis in the Holy Land," p. 508.

²⁷ Thorau, pp. 79–85; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, whom Baybars commissioned to write his biography, would stress that his master dealt the fatal blow in order to strengthen his claim to the succession: Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 67–8.

Baybars's rise from slave-boy to sultan was a rare feat of premodern self-fashioning, but it was only a first step for him. The Mamluk sultanate was not firmly established prior to his accession. The reigns of his predecessors had been brief and tenuous. Over the seventeen years of his reign (1260–77), Baybars created a genuine Near Eastern superpower and a state that would endure into the sixteenth century. His first steps along this road were cautious and almost reactionary. Looking back to his beloved master al-Salih Ayyub as a model, he aimed to consolidate his hold on power in Egypt *and* Syria while strengthening his military to fend off external threats. His early goals were defensive and focused on the Mongols: he wanted to prevent them from penetrating across the Euphrates into Syria while simultaneously denying a beachhead to any support that might come to them from western Europe.²⁸ The Franks who gathered in Acre in the summer of 1260 to ponder a Mongol alliance were convinced that joining them in a genuine military collaboration was impossible. After 'Ayn Jalut, however, Mongol attitudes toward relations with other powers shifted significantly. As early as 1262, Hülegü was making diplomatic overtures to western Europe.²⁹ Throughout his reign, Baybars would work to prevent a Mongol–European alliance that could attack the Mamluk sultanate on two fronts.

Baybars pursued his plans for internal consolidation and frontier defense in several interrelated ways. His first priority was military reform. While exact numbers are always lacking for medieval armies, he appears to have nearly doubled the number of soldiers at his disposal, with his army reaching an effective strength of perhaps as many as 40,000 men. Although spread throughout his vast domains, and never all available at the same time, this represented a fighting force that dwarfed what any contemporary European ruler could mobilize. Because they were so essential to the Mamluk way of fighting, cavalry formed a privileged core within the army. Besides a unit of “the sultan’s” Mamluks, Baybars maintained a personal guard of 4,000 Mamluks, known as the *Zahiriyya* after his regnal name of al-Malik al-Zahir (“the triumphant king”).³⁰ Unlike many of his peers in the Islamic Near East, Baybars also tried to

²⁸ Humphreys, “Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East in the Thirteenth Century,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 2 (1998): p. 13.

²⁹ Paul Meyvaert, “An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France,” *Viator* 11 (1980): pp. 245–59.

³⁰ On Baybars’s military reforms, see Amitai, “Early Mamluks,” pp. 331–2; Northrup, “Bahri Mamluk Sultanate,” pp. 259–62; David Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,” *Bulletin of the School of Asian and African Studies* 15 (1953): pp. 203–28, 448–76; 16 (1954): pp. 57–90; reprinted in Ayalon, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt (1250–1517)* (London: Variorum, 1977).

build up a naval presence in the Mediterranean. He could sometimes be found in the shipyards of Alexandria overseeing construction, and he sent a squadron of these precious vessels on an ill-fated expedition to Cyprus.³¹ There was an internal dimension to this military build-up as well. Under Baybars, the Mamluk state became a military autocracy through and through, with civil administration undergoing rapid militarization.

Maintaining and expanding the military required Baybars to engage in complex multilateral diplomacy. Mamluks formed the backbone of his army. Keeping up their numbers required constant infusions of new recruits, because they could not reproduce themselves. A Mamluk was a former slave converted to Islam. If he had a son, the boy would be born a free Muslim and could not become a Mamluk like his father. To keep the supply line open between Egypt and the Mamluk recruiting grounds in the south Russian steppe, Baybars had to deal with three powers: the Golden Horde, the Mongol splinter group that ruled the area and controlled trade routes through the Caucasus and Anatolia; the Genoese, who dominated shipping in the Black Sea; and the Byzantines, who had retaken their capital Constantinople in 1261 and thus controlled trade traffic across the Bosphorus. Not only did Baybars have to maintain peaceful relations with each group individually, he had to make sure that they got along among themselves as well. In 1264, for example, Baybars had to intervene when the Golden Horde invaded Byzantium. He was able to arrange a truce between Berke, khan of the Golden Horde, and Michael VIII Palaiologos, the Byzantine emperor, which kept the slaves flowing into Alexandria.³²

Baybars's diplomatic aims extended beyond military procurement. He cultivated Manfred, the Hohenstaufen ruler of the kingdom of Sicily, because Manfred could help keep the pope preoccupied in southern Italy, which would make it more difficult for the Apostolic See to organize a crusade against Egypt and Syria. By dint of his central Mediterranean location, Manfred could also disrupt potential French naval support to the Mongol state that Hülegü was developing in Iran, known as the Ilkhanate, and its clients in Lesser Armenia. Beyond these strategic considerations, Sicilian trade was important to the merchants of Alexandria. Baybars's

³¹ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 193–4, vol. 2: pp. 152–3.

³² Andrew Ehrenkreutz, "Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century," in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1981), pp. 335–45; Reuven Amitai, "Diplomacy and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Re-examination of the Mamluk–Byzantine–Genoese Triangle in the Late Thirteenth Century in Light of the Existing Early Correspondence," *Oriente Moderno* 87 (2008): pp. 349–68.

most important ally, however, was Berke, khan of the Golden Horde since 1257. In addition to controlling the Mamluk recruiting grounds, Berke served as a counterweight to the Ilkhan Hülegü in Iran. Following the classic divide and conquer strategy, Baybars did as much as he could to foster discord between the Mongol rivals. Berke's status as a Muslim convert certainly helped, but issues of power and control mainly seem to have driven the conflict. Baybars was thrilled when open war broke out between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde in December 1262 and was even more pleased when Berke emerged as the victor.³³

Baybars's diplomacy also featured espionage. He valued military intelligence and early in his reign restored the postal system (*barid*) that had once run throughout the Near East. Using a network of horse relays, the *barid* transmitted military intelligence and administrative correspondence between Damascus and Cairo, often in as few as four days. Supplementing the horse relays were a pigeon post and optical signals. An early-warning system of bonfires ran along the sensitive Euphrates frontier to warn of impending Mongol incursions. Back in Cairo, Baybars appointed a spy-master, set up a secret department for back-channel payments, and hired "couriers" who traveled deep into Frankish, Mongol, and Armenian territory. In the intelligence battle between Baybars and his main rivals, there was no contest. He would exploit his superior intelligence gathering again and again over the course of his reign.³⁴

As Baybars strengthened the army and assembled his network of allies and spies, his advisors developed an ideology to justify his rule over Egypt and Syria. In keeping with the militarized culture of the Mamluk ruling elite, the language of war predominated in official pronouncements. Baybars's chancery often invoked an image of the state as a citadel or fortress that needed defending from external enemies.³⁵ Baybars's titles also emphasized his role as a war leader. In two Syrian inscriptions dating from his reign, Baybars is called among other epithets *al-murabit* ("the defender of the border fortress"), *fatih al-amsar* ("conqueror of the cities"), and *qatil al-khawarij* ("killer of the rebels").³⁶ Underpinning this martial vocabulary was a sense of struggle against religiously defined enemies.

³³ Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 124–8; Amitai, "Early Mamluks," p. 334; Thorau, pp. 123–8.

³⁴ Amitai, "Early Mamluks," p. 333; Thorau, pp. 123–8.

³⁵ Humphreys, "Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East," pp. 14–15.

³⁶ Reuven Amitai, "Some Remarks on the Inscription of Baybars at Maqam Nabi Musa," in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 47–8; Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, pp. 58–9.

Here, the juridical tradition of jihad came to hand. By the mid-thirteenth century, Islamic legal scholars commonly recognized two forms of jihad, a greater one that an individual waged against his or her faults and a lesser one that the leader of the Islamic community waged against the non-Muslim world. In Baybars's hands, these two forms of holy war came together in a linked effort to purify the realm of internal taints while prosecuting the jihad against the infidel Franks of the crusader states and the Shamanist–Buddhist–Nestorian Christian-sympathizing Ilkhanate of Iran.³⁷ In Egypt, Baybars launched a series of morality campaigns, banning hashish consumption, wine making, and taverns; expelling Frankish prostitutes from Alexandria; and forbidding prostitution outright in Cairo. He also maintained a friendship with Shayhk Khadir b. Abi Bakr al-Mihrani, who became a kind of spiritual advisor to him. To the frustration of his retinue, Baybars lavishly funded Shayhk Khadir's Sufi *zawiya* in Cairo and took his advice even on military matters. Esteemed by Baybars for his abilities as a clairvoyant, Shayhk Khadir predicted success for the sultan in his campaigns against the Mongols and the Franks. In this, at least, he was proved correct.³⁸

For many medieval Near Eastern regimes, ideological imperatives did not align with the practical demands of statecraft. This was the case with the Ayyubids and the crusader states in the early decades of the thirteenth century. Despite articulating ideologies of holy war, authorities on both sides usually found it more advantageous to pursue their interests through treaty negotiations than open warfare. The two powers were able to coexist in a relationship that at times bordered on the symbiotic. For Baybars, by contrast, a pious commitment to jihad perfectly suited the strategic situation he faced. The new factor, of course, was the Mongols. Whereas the Ayyubids and the crusader states mainly had to deal with each other, the appearance of a third party on the scene, and a powerful, unpredictable one at that, created a new strategic calculus. Faced with two external enemies, Baybars would attempt to turn a two-front war into a one-front war by eliminating the lesser threat: the fractious, divided Franks of Palestine and Syria.³⁹

The intertwining of practical and ideological rationales for war against the crusader states made Baybars appear a bitter enemy to the Franks and their supporters in western Europe. The reality was more complex, since

³⁷ Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 227–44.

³⁸ Thorau, pp. 196, 225–9.

³⁹ Cobb, *Race for Paradise*, p. 221; Humphreys, "Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East," pp. 10–11; Amitai, "Early Mamluks," pp. 336–7.

fear of a Mongol incursion across the Euphrates remained uppermost in his mind. His major campaigns against the Franks were launched during pauses in the conflict with the Ilkhanate. The first serious Mamluk incursion into Frankish territory took place in the spring of 1263, shortly after Berke of the Golden Horde had defeated the Ilkhan Hülegü. Taking advantage of the freedom of action that this victory gave him, Baybars advanced north in late March 1263 and made camp at Mount Tabor. There, he received envoys from the Franks of Acre. They reassured him that they intended to honor a truce they had made with him in 1261. Baybars accused them of breaking the agreement by not returning prisoners they had promised to release. He broke off negotiations and refused to let the ambassadors spend the night in camp. Shortly after that, he authorized a raid on nearby Nazareth. His troops made sure to destroy the church of St Mary, signaling the symbolic intent behind the strike. A few weeks later, on April 15, 1263, Baybars himself left the camp at Mount Tabor with a small raiding party in the middle of the night. By dawn of the next morning, they were outside the walls of Acre, the capital of the Frankish kingdom. They destroyed a mill that made up a part of the city's fortifications and devastated the agricultural land that surrounded the city. Many Frankish knights died in the fighting. Message delivered, Baybars returned south to Mount Tabor without trying to take the city.⁴⁰

In the spring of 1264, the Franks launched retaliatory raids under the leadership of Geoffrey of Sergines, the *bailli* (governor) of Acre and a trusted confidant of Louis IX. Geoffrey and his men attacked Mamluk territory around Ascalon in June, destroying crops and rustling livestock. Baybars responded by launching raids as far north as Caesarea and Chastel Pèlerin. In November, a small group of French crusaders led by Olivier of Termes, another close associate of Louis IX, raided around Baysan, where they plundered what they could and set fire to everything else.⁴¹

In 1265, this low-level raiding gave way to large-scale Mamluk attacks on Frankish strongholds. The impetus came from the Ilkhanate. In January 1265, Hülegü attacked the fortress of al-Bira, the linchpin of the Mamluk defensive system along the Euphrates. Baybars was on a hunting trip when he heard the news. Before he had even returned to Cairo, he sent an emir on a racehorse to Syria to gather 4,000 cavalry to rush north against Hülegü. On January 25, Baybars himself marched out

⁴⁰ Thorau, pp. 135–9, 145–8; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 416–17.

⁴¹ Thorau, pp. 149–50; on Baybars's use of economic warfare in his campaigns against the Franks, see Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), pp. 47–8.

of Cairo with as many troops as he could muster. Soon after that, though, he learned that the Mongols had lifted the siege. Baybars was so grateful for this unexpected boon that he banned the drinking and brewing of beer in his domains.

The sultan now had a large army in the field with no Mongols around to trouble it. He had a large tent put up in his camp at al-ʿAwja. Inside it, carpenters built five catapults. Other siege equipment was assembled in secrecy. On the morning of February 27, 1265, the Mamluk army fell on Frankish Caesarea, taking the garrison by surprise. Caesarea lay on the coast and could not be surrounded without naval support. Louis IX had rebuilt its fortifications about a decade earlier. Nonetheless, the city fell in about a week, with the garrison fleeing by ship to Acre. Because of its position on the coast, Baybars ordered Caesarea to be demolished. When Saladin had conquered up and down the Mediterranean coast, he had left the crusader strongholds intact, which gave the Third Crusade a bridge-head from which to renew the fight against him. Baybars learned from that mistake. He would not leave anything on the coast to which the Franks could return. In mid-March 1265, he brought his army south to Arsuf. The Frankish garrison here held out longer, but in the end the result was the same. The Mamluks captured the town at the end of April and tore it down to the ground.⁴²

The Mamluk raids of 1264 had aimed at reducing the productive capacity of the kingdom of Acre; they had also made clear that there was no safe haven for its subjects from Mamluk attacks, even under the walls of its capital. The campaigns of 1265 had sliced off two key southern strongholds of the crusader kingdom, leaving it reduced in size and more vulnerable to attack. The offensive of 1266 seemed to combine the goals of the previous two campaigns into a total onslaught that devastated large swathes of Frankish territory and culminated in the loss of a major inland castle.

Baybars rode out of Cairo on May 10, 1266 at the head of a large army. At Gaza, he sent off a detachment of about 7,000 cavalry to Hims, in northern Syria. It was only once these units had reached the city that they received orders to attack the county of Tripoli, the crusader state that lay immediately to the north of the kingdom of Acre. Avoiding the great Hospitaller castle of Crac des Chevaliers (Hisn al-Akrad), they destroyed as much agricultural land as they could and picked off several smaller strongholds nearby. After two weeks of this, they returned to Hims with

⁴² Thorau, pp. 158–62; for Baybars's strategy toward Frankish coastal fortifications, see Albrecht Fuess, "Rotting Ships and Razed Harbours: The Naval Policy of the Mamluks," *Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): pp. 45–71.

about 3,000 Frankish prisoners. While these troopers ravaged up north, Baybars directed raids along the coast above Acre, focusing on Tyre and Sidon.

With the crusader states from Arsuf in the south to Tripoli in the north under simultaneous attack, Baybars revealed the final objective of the campaign: Safad, a massive castle located about 25 miles east of Acre. The Templars had rebuilt Safad at enormous cost in the 1240s as a base from which to dominate the Galilee and the eastern approaches to Acre from Damascus.⁴³ They did not give up the castle easily. Several attempts to storm the fortifications failed in early July 1266. On July 20, part of the outer works fell and the garrison retreated to the citadel. Three days later, the Templars tried to negotiate a withdrawal. Believing that they had come to an agreement with Baybars's *atabak* (commander-in-chief), they left the stronghold and were taken into custody. The next morning, they realized that while they might have an agreement with the *atabak*, they did not have one with the sultan. Baybars brought the Frankish captives—mainly Templar Knights and their many support staff—to a hill where the knights used to execute Muslim prisoners. He had all of them (about 1,500) beheaded, except for two: one to tell the authorities in Acre what had happened, and another, a Syrian Christian, who was spared because his fluent Arabic had allowed him to serve as a go-between during the negotiations. News of the loss of Safad and the slaughter of its garrison would travel back to Acre and far beyond. By the late summer of 1266, it had reached France, where it would inspire a king to take the cross for the second time.⁴⁴

LOUIS IX

Louis did not return home after his release from captivity in the summer of 1250, sailing instead to Acre. He stayed in the Holy Land for the next four years, trying to make up for the disastrous opening stages of his crusade. He hoped to take advantage of the conflict between the new Mamluk regime in Cairo and the leading Ayyubid prince of Syria, al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo and Damascus. Louis was unable to exploit this division, however, because of the large number of crusader prisoners that remained in Mamluk hands after his Nile campaign. To secure their release, he had

⁴³ Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 189–92.

⁴⁴ Thorau, pp. 166–71; Cobb, *Race for Paradise*, p. 228.

to ally with his former captors. Once again, Louis found himself unwittingly facilitating the rise of the power that would eventually prove to be the crusader states' greatest enemy. Limited diplomatically, the king devoted himself to refortifying several Frankish strongholds: Haifa, Caesarea, Jaffa, and Sidon. He also set up a garrison of one hundred French knights in Acre, under the command of Geoffrey of Sergines. Having exhausted his usefulness, and with the regent of France—his mother, Blanche of Castile—having died in late 1252, he sailed for France in April 1254.⁴⁵

He came back a changed man. Like many of his contemporaries, Louis subscribed to the sin–punishment paradigm for understanding disasters on the epic scale of his Egyptian crusade. Mansura and its aftermath could not be blamed on a loving God; these calamities must have been the fault of the crusaders, or of the Christian people in general, or of the king who had led his crusade into captivity. As Louis searched for redemption, he took up the life of a perpetual penitent.⁴⁶ The first change contemporaries noticed was in his clothing. Jean of Joinville, his loyal companion on the crusade, observed how:

After the king's return from overseas his conduct was so devout that never again did he wear vair or grey fur or scarlet, nor golden stirrups and spurs. His clothes were made of camelin or dark-blue wool, his blankets and clothes were trimmed with deerskin or lambskin or with fur from the legs of hares.⁴⁷

Vair was a lavish kind of fur mantle or coat that was made from sewing together the gray backs and white underbellies of squirrels into an interlocking pattern; camelin, by contrast, was a modest woolen fabric. Louis's confessor, the Dominican Geoffrey of Beaulieu, explained that the clothing decreased in value enough to affect the king's donations:

And, since such clothing seemed to be of less worth for giving to the poor than did the more costly clothes he was accustomed to wearing in his youth, he made up for this by ensuring that each year his almoner would have sixty Parisian *livres* to give for the sake of God, in addition to what he usually received. For our pious king did not want his more public show of humility to deprive something from the poor.⁴⁸

As Geoffrey makes clear, the king paid as much attention to charity as he did to his dress. Giving alms to the Christian poor was standard practice

⁴⁵ Joinville, pp. 422–512 (Smith, pp. 262–99); *Seventh Crusade*, pp. 205–31.

⁴⁶ Étienne Delaruelle, "L'idée de croisade chez saint Louis," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 61 (1960): pp. 251–4; Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 142.

⁴⁷ Joinville, p. 544 (Smith, p. 313).

⁴⁸ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 6 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 77, slightly altered).

for medieval European kings, even for those not noted for their piety. After the failure of his first crusade, Louis took charitable giving to unprecedented levels. He gave money to institutions, particularly hospitals, leprosariums, residences for former female prostitutes, and religious houses of many kinds. Joinville gives the following list of religious houses that Louis founded in and around Paris in 1258–9 alone: a house for the Carmelites near Charenton; a farm for the Augustinians near Montmartre; a place for the Brothers of the Sacks on the Seine near Saint-Germain-des-Prés; a residence for the Order of the White Mantles near the Old Temple Gate; and a house for the Brothers of the Holy Cross in Temple Crossroads. Louis also gave directly to people. Every day, wherever he was, he hosted some 120 poor Christians for meals.⁴⁹

Louis's service to vulnerable Christians took on strong overtones of self-abasement after the disaster in the Nile Delta. When he arrived at Sidon to begin refortifying the stronghold, he found the remains of a defeated Frankish squadron. He spent the morning gathering up the half-rotted limbs, entrails, and bones of these ordinary soldiers for proper Christian burial. Back in Paris, he washed the feet of three poor men every Saturday, finishing the task with a kiss. One day he was washing the feet of an old man who, either unaware of or unconcerned about the status of the person caring for him, demanded that the king be sure "to wash and clean between the toes, where the grime was hiding." Louis's entourage gasped, but the king stuck his fingers between the old man's toes and cleaned away until the job was done to his liking.⁵⁰ Guillaume of Chartres, who tells this story, tells another about the king sharing a rich and greasy dish with a "wretched and sickly" poor man who tucked into it for a few minutes with "filthy, ulcerous hands" and then declared himself full:

And then our renowned king, seeing this, out of his innate virtue of humility, asked to have back what the poor man had left and in which he had stained his dirty hands, saying, "Give me back my pudding!" And, to the amazement of many, as much as the mind was horrified, he began to eat from this with such relish and enthusiasm as if no one had touched it at all.⁵¹

When it came to demonstrating humility, Louis did not shy away from the grotesque.

Louis's public displays of piety tended to dramatize a grandiose style of humility that only the exalted could achieve. For who else besides a king,

⁴⁹ Joinville, pp. 578–82 (Smith, pp. 325–7); Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 11 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 90).

⁵⁰ Guillaume of Chartres, pp. 31–2, 35 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 137–8, 145).

⁵¹ Guillaume of Chartres, p. 35 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 144–5).

born into privilege, could descend so far? Out of the public eye, in the private sphere that only his confessors saw, he mixed conventional forms of devotion with a taste for physical repentance. He loved listening to sermons and he confessed at least once a week—on Fridays—and sometimes more often than that. After the crusade, he had two confessors on staff—Geoffrey of Beaulieu and Guillaume of Chartres—so that one of them could be available to hear him at any time. After making his confession, he would receive discipline “with five identical slender iron chains, the heads of which were well bound to a small ivory case.” “If his confessor was sometimes lenient with his blows,” Geoffrey explained, “and the king thought he was sparing him this way, he would nod to him as a sign to strike harder.” Louis would give these little boxes of iron switches to his children or close friends “as a form of secret gift.”⁵²

As Louis’s idea of what might make a nice gift suggests, the tone at court in the wake of the failed Egyptian campaign was austere. The new spirit matched the mendicant brand of piety to which the king was deeply attracted. His confessors were both Dominicans, which was one of the two main mendicant orders. One of his chief advisors, Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, belonged to the other, the Franciscans. The Dominican Vincent of Beauvais educated Louis’s children. The king was coy about which order he liked better. “He was particularly fond of these two,” Geoffrey says, “for he used to say that if he could make two portions from his body, he would give half to one and the rest to the other.”⁵³ Louis was perhaps the greatest patron of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Europe.⁵⁴ By 1275, there were 423 mendicant houses in France.⁵⁵ Louis was such a partisan of the mendicants in their dispute with the secular masters of the University of Paris that supporters of the secular masters began to call the king *Frater Ludovicus*.⁵⁶ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, admittedly a far from disinterested source on the matter, thought that Louis’s secret wish was to become a mendicant friar once his eldest son came of age. According to Geoffrey, at least, Louis only gave up the plan when his

⁵² *Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 87–8. (The chapter from which these excerpts are drawn was not included in the edition of the text printed in the *RHGF*.)

⁵³ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 7 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 80, slightly altered).

⁵⁴ Lester K. Little, “Saint Louis’ Involvement with the Friars,” *Church History* 33 (1964): p. 134; Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), pp. 746–80. Le Goff also highlights the importance of Cistercian modes of piety to the king.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France, 987–1328*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2001), p. 293.

⁵⁶ Michel-Marie Dufeil, *Guillaume de Saint-Amour et la polémique universitaire parisienne, 1250–1259* (Paris: A. Paris and J. Picard, 1972); Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 409–16; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, p. 213.

wife pointed out to him that divine providence had placed him on a king's throne and for that reason he should probably stay on it.⁵⁷

The secular masters received strident support from poets who had their own reasons for disliking the mendicant cast of the post-crusade regime. The poet Rutebeuf, who depended on courtly patronage for his living, was unhappy to see less singing, dancing, and feasting at court. He grumbled, "Now we are not allowed to dance, because it is this that lost the Holy Land."⁵⁸ In one sardonic line, Rutebeuf summed up the gloomy consequences of the king's search for personal redemption in the aftermath of disaster.

Rutebeuf's quip also points to the broader impact of Louis's drive for purity and deeper Christianization. As a king, Louis had to answer before God not only for himself and his household, but for all the Christian subjects of his kingdom. His own struggle for salvation was inextricably linked to the fortunes of those commended to his care. Louis was always aware of this larger responsibility and had acted on it vigorously in the run-up to his first crusade. As he sought to purify himself and the realm before departing overseas in 1248, he had intensified his support for inquisitorial proceedings against heretics in the Languedoc, made reparations for abuses carried out by royal administrators, and stepped up surveillance of Jewish life. While the spiritual intent behind these measures is clear enough, each also had financial implications. The property of convicted heretics went to the heretic's lord, who was in many instances the king of France; reforming government administration could lead to more efficient revenue collection; and debts paid to Jews could be confiscated and repurposed to a pious end: the crusade to the Holy Land. In his enthusiasm for the expedition, the king had raised large sums of money, and not just from these expedients. He had also collected about 950,000 *l.t.* from taxation on the French Church and another 274,000 *l.t.* from "voluntary" contributions from towns in the Île de France.⁵⁹

On his return to France in 1254, Louis decided that he had been too vigorous in extracting money from his subjects. To rectify this mistake, he launched a fresh reform effort, which he hoped would create a truly just realm. He took two important measures within his first year back in the country. First, he made oversight of local officials a permanent feature of government. Prior to his first crusade, he had sent special

⁵⁷ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 7 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 80).

⁵⁸ Rutebeuf, "La complainte de Constantinople," verse 9, lines 103–4, in Rutebeuf, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. and trans. Michel Zink (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1990), pp. 410–11.

⁵⁹ Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 51–64, 80–6, 98.

investigators—*enquêteurs*—around the kingdom to examine the performance of royal administrators in their duties. They resumed their work in 1254, accepting petitions for redress from vulnerable members of Christian society. What had been an ad hoc measure to help gear up for the king's first crusade became an established feature of his rule.⁶⁰ Second, he issued a series of reform ordinances that are collectively known as the Great Ordinance of 1254. The measures covered his familiar concerns with equitable administration, Jewish policy, and the suppression of heresy.

In the administrative realm, the king took steps to reduce corruption among royal officials. In Louis's day, the kingdom was divided into districts called *bailliages*, each administered by its *bailli*. The reform ordinance of 1254 instituted an audit system for office holders and prevented *baillis* from embedding themselves in the communities they served by forbidding them from owning property there or marrying their children to local residents.⁶¹

Increased oversight and greater centralization were also features of the ordinance addressing inquisitorial investigations. With the agreement of Pope Alexander IV, Louis placed the University of Paris in charge of these proceedings for the entire realm and called on the *enquêteurs* to ensure that property confiscations were carried out with greater concern for the rights of the accused than they had been prior to his first crusade.⁶²

No measures suggested more strongly the king's concern to purify his realm than those he enacted against the Jewish communities of France. In 1253, while still in Syria, Louis had issued an order expelling from the kingdom Jews who engaged in usury, or lending money at interest. In December 1254, as part of his great reform ordinance, he reissued this call and put in place further strictures as well. Jews were to stop their usury; henceforth, they were to live only "from the labor of their own hands or from commerce." Copies of the Talmud, along with other Jewish books "in which blasphemies were discovered," were to be burned. All Jews who did not wish to observe these regulations were to be expelled.⁶³ As we shall see, Louis's desire to eliminate Jewish practices and beliefs that he regarded as sinful would intensify in the last years of his life. Eventually, this drive to eradicate Jewish error would merge with a growing interest in conversion to exert a decisive influence on the Tunis Crusade.

⁶⁰ Jordan, *Louis IX*, p. 153.

⁶¹ *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: p. 67 (investigation of previous office holder), p. 71 (prohibition on local marriages); Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 159–60.

⁶² Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 157–8.

⁶³ William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 148; *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: p. 75.

While the Jews of France came in for severe scrutiny, Louis found the behavior of many of his Christian subjects wanting as well. In tandem with his administrative overhaul he launched a program of moral reform, which targeted prostitution, swearing, and blasphemy. His aversion to blasphemous oaths was proverbial. In Caesarea, Louis put a blasphemous goldsmith in the stocks, with pig entrails piled up to his nose. Back in France, Louis branded “the nose and lips of one Paris bourgeois” who had been caught swearing. This was an extreme punishment by the standards of the time. Joinville thought a slap to the hand or face was the appropriate response to anyone who cursed a fellow child of God to the devil.⁶⁴

Louis’s quest for redemption also directed him toward the role of peacemaker in Europe. After his return from crusade, he tried to reduce conflicts with neighbors and rivals on the principle that Christians should not fight among themselves. As Joinville recounts, some of Louis’s counselors questioned whether this was good strategy. Left to their own devices, the enemies of France could exhaust themselves fighting one another. The king disagreed: God would bless the peacemakers, and in any event if he refused to intercede his enemies might band together in hatred of him and launch a joint attack too powerful for him to withstand. Louis also had more practical grounds for seeking peace. Conflicts among the major European royal houses had limited participation in the Egyptian crusade. If western Christendom were ever to organize a coordinated effort to reconquer the Holy Land, it would have to begin with peace on the home front.

Louis started with England, a long-standing enemy. After years of negotiations, he agreed to the Treaty of Paris with King Henry III in 1259. Both sides made concessions to secure the agreement. Henry acknowledged that Normandy was lost to his dynasty forever, while Louis paid an indemnity and surrendered disputed lands in the Limousin, Quercy, and Périgord. When his counselors complained that he had given up too much, Louis answered that he and Henry were related (they had married sisters) and their children were cousins, so the familial bond should prevail. Even before negotiations with Henry concluded, Louis reached an agreement with another powerful neighbor, King Jaume I of Aragon. In the Treaty of Corbeil, the two monarchs fixed the boundary between their two realms at the Pyrenees, with the exception of Montpellier, which remained under Aragonese rule. Louis’s reputation as a

⁶⁴ Joinville, pp. 556–8 (Smith, p. 318). For discussion of this legislation and how it worked to create a “genuinely repressive regime,” see William Chester Jordan, *Men at the Center: Redemptive Governance under Louis IX* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012), pp. 101–3.

peacemaker began to spread. To Christian contemporaries, if not to Jews and Muslims, he was the *rex pacificus*.⁶⁵

THE NEW CRUSADE

While Louis settled his differences with Aragon and England, other European conflicts remained intractable. The papacy and the Hohenstaufen dynasty had been at war since the late 1230s. As the conflict dragged on, the leading figures on both sides changed, but the basic dynamic remained in place: with the Hohenstaufen in control of the kingdom of Sicily in the south and the German empire in the north, and with the dynasty's Ghibelline allies active in northern Italy, the papacy feared for its independence as both a spiritual and secular power in Europe and the Mediterranean. Regarding the Hohenstaufen as an existential threat, successive popes poured crusading resources into military campaigns to defeat them.

The impact of this struggle on European support for the crusader states of the Holy Land was direct and multifaceted. In the mid-thirteenth century, the papacy remained at the center of crusade policy. While it retained formal authority over the launching of expeditions, its real influence over the movement derived from its ability to tap into lucrative sources of funding: legacies and testamentary bequests left in aid of crusading causes; the redemption of crusader vows for cash payments; and taxation on church revenues. While many European nobles who went on crusade had funded their own campaigns in the twelfth century, by the thirteenth, papal funding was regarded as indispensable to their participation.⁶⁶ The popes, however, retained the right to shift crusading resources from one theater to another as their own priorities dictated. In the late 1250s and early 1260s, many venues were competing with the Holy Land for the curia's attention. A partial list would include crusades against the Golden Horde in eastern Europe; against Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos to regain the Latin empire of Constantinople; against rivals to the Teutonic Knights around the Baltic Sea; against Muslim al-Andalus in the Iberian Peninsula; and against the baronial opposition to King Henry III of England. None of these venues, however, competed for crusading resources with the Holy Land as successfully as the conflict in the papacy's own backyard.

⁶⁵ Joinville, pp. 554–6 (Smith, pp. 316–18); Richard, *Saint Louis*, pp. 352–60; Jordan, *Louis IX*, p. 203.

⁶⁶ Lower, *Barons' Crusade*, p. 14.

In 1262, Pope Urban IV tried to recruit a prince who could seize the kingdom of Sicily from the Hohenstaufen and rule it as a papal ally. He entered into negotiations with Charles of Anjou, count of Provence and Louis IX's youngest brother. These discussions led to crusade preaching on Charles's behalf in 1264–5 and the imposition of a 10 percent tax on the income of the French church for three years.⁶⁷ The promotional campaign for Charles's Sicilian crusade coincided exactly with Baybars's first sustained offensives against the kingdom of Acre, placing the papacy on the horns of a dilemma.

Balancing the conflicting priorities proved challenging for Pope Clement IV, who succeeded Urban IV in February 1265. Clement was well known to both Charles of Anjou and Louis IX from his previous service as bishop of Le Puy and archbishop of Narbonne. He had depended on these men for patronage as he advanced through the ranks of the French Church. He now occupied a higher office, but found that he needed them more than ever as the struggle with the Hohenstaufen reached a crisis point. With the future of the papacy seemingly at stake, he plunged into the family drama at the heart of the Tunis Crusade. Louis—the older brother, the reigning monarch—had spent the past decade remaking his life and his realm in anticipation of a new crusade to the east. He continued to sponsor the French regiment in Acre and was disturbed by its inability to stop Baybars's attacks.⁶⁸ For Louis, the Holy Land remained the priority. Charles—the youngest brother, the would-be king—was fixated on Sicily. Clement was too, but he knew that its conquest would never go forward against Louis's wishes. Clement's solution to this quandary drew on the traditions of medieval scholasticism and casuistry, where the goal was always to reveal the deeper harmonies underlying seemingly conflicting goods. He argued that crusading to the Holy Land and crusading to Sicily were not irreconcilable goals. The conquest of Sicily was essential to the long-term security of the crusader states for two reasons, one ideological, the other strategic. First, the Church was a body with the pope as its head. How could the various members of the body survive if it suffered decapitation? Second, with its central Mediterranean location Sicily could serve as a staging ground for Holy Land expeditions.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Norman Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 18–19.

⁶⁸ Strayer, p. 508.

⁶⁹ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 817 (Manfred of Sicily as threat to Rome), no. 838 (aid for the Holy Land may be more easily furnished from Sicily).

For a time, Louis accepted these arguments. He had already seen how the papal–Hohenstaufen conflict had hindered recruitment outside the kingdom of France for his first crusade. Since then, the problem had gotten worse. While papal crusade preachers gathered the three-year tenth in France for the Sicilian campaign, the Holy Land received a smaller subsidy: a five-year hundredth in the same territory.⁷⁰ Clement also allowed crusaders to commute their vows from the Holy Land to Sicily, while still earning the full Holy Land crusade indulgence.⁷¹ Louis may have felt that papal priorities would not shift until the Sicilian question was settled. Putting Charles on the Sicilian throne might also allow the island to fulfill its potential as a strategic hub for Latin Christian control of the narrow sea lanes through the central Mediterranean. The Hohenstaufen had maintained peaceful relations with the Ayyubids and the Mamluks. With a Capetian in control, Sicily could help to restrict Mamluk naval operations in a way that could benefit crusader Syria.

As momentum for a Sicilian crusade built over 1265, Clement and Louis reached a rough and ready compromise. Louis allowed his brother to go ahead with the invasion and receive the larger share of available papal crusade funding. In the meantime, Clement permitted Louis to take control of the smaller portion that would be devoted to the crusader states. In an unprecedented move, Clement instructed his legate in France, Gilles of Saumur, archbishop of Tyre, to hand over the proceeds of the hundredth to Louis for him to distribute as he saw fit.⁷² In the summer of 1265, as the king digested the news of the fall of Arsuf and Caesarea to Baybars, a small expedition of French knights, led by two men with close ties to royal circles, prepared to depart for the crusader states. Énard of Valery and Eudes, count of Nevers, arrived in Acre in October 1265 with a relief force of about sixty knights.⁷³ In the same month, Charles set out for Rome with a much larger army.

Not everyone agreed with the priorities reflected in this distribution of troops. The papal legate Gilles of Saumur became frustrated with the lack of support for the crusader states. On November 23, 1265, he wrote a letter to an official who was helping him look after his affairs in Tyre. The tone was formal and correct. Within that letter, Gilles enclosed an unsealed, unaddressed, and undated document, in which he unleashed a withering critique of the papal crusade policy he was dutifully carrying out. “It seems

⁷⁰ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 217; *Layettes*, no. 4893.

⁷¹ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 216.

⁷² *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1582.

⁷³ *Layettes*, no. 5076; Jean Richard, “La croisade de 1270, premier ‘passage général?’” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 133 (1989): p. 515.

hard enough," he began, "that the lord pope grants the power of commuting the cross of the Holy Land in aid of Apulia [i.e. the kingdom of Sicily], yet it seems harder still that money assigned by the devotion of the faithful for the said Holy Land is directed toward Apulia and the wishes of testators are scarcely fulfilled, which we have found in many places we have gone to preach." He went on to complain about clergy who had taken the cross for the Holy Land, which should have exempted them from paying any crusade-related taxation, nonetheless being compelled to pay the tenth for Sicily. He ended by wondering when he might be allowed to return to Tyre, where he wished to die.⁷⁴

His wish would not come true. Although Pope Clement granted him permission to return to his diocese in the early spring of 1266, Gilles never made it there. He passed away in Dinant on April 24.⁷⁵ By then, the papal plan he opposed had been put into action. In February 1266, Charles of Anjou invaded southern Italy and defeated the Hohenstaufen king of Sicily, Manfred, at the battle of Benevento. With Sicily in Capetian hands, the papacy had less reason to fear committing to a Holy Land crusade.

Pope Clement began to shift crusade recruitment and fundraising toward the Holy Land in April 1266. He ordered Simon of Brie, the cardinal-priest of St Cecilia (and future Pope Martin IV), who had been promoting the Sicilian crusade in France, to switch to Syria. Clement seems to have envisioned a smaller force recruited from the Low Countries, northern Germany, and the northern Francophone borderlands. There were two advantages to organizing a smaller expedition, which crusade theorists would come to call a *passagium particulare*. First, it could set out sooner than a great "general passage." Clement urged crusaders to depart for the east in the autumn 1266 sea passage if they could manage it; failing that, they should sail in the spring 1267 passage. Second, a modest expedition could leave intact funding for the Sicilian crusade. The campaign in Sicily may have been over as far as Clement was concerned, but paying for it had just begun. The three-year Sicilian tenth was still being collected in France and there was no question of diverting those revenues toward another crusading theater. Another of Louis IX's brothers, Alphonse, count of Poitiers and Toulouse, asked Clement whether he could draw on the Sicilian tenth if he were to take the cross for the Holy Land. The short answer: no, he could not. If he wanted money to go to Syria, he should ask Louis to release some funds from the five-year hundredth for the Holy Land.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Layettes*, nos. 5118–19.

⁷⁵ Sternfeld, p. 15.

⁷⁶ *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 1045, 843–4, 1046.

By the late summer of 1266, a *passagium particulare* for the Holy Land was taking shape. Clement granted subsidies from the hundredth to the counts of Flanders, Juliers, Cleves, and Luxembourg. Pierre of Brittany (the son of Count Jean) and the bishop of Liège had also signed on by mid-August. Two thousand crossbowmen were to be recruited from France and England to support the knights.⁷⁷ In September 1266, however, these plans were thrown into doubt when news of Baybars's capture of Safad and execution of the Templar garrison reached the major European capitals.

For Louis, Safad was the turning point. He sent a secret embassy to Viterbo to inform the pope that he planned to take the cross. On some level, Clement must have known this was coming. Louis had been preparing for this step for a long time. Still, the pope was shocked when the moment finally arrived. Louis was an old 52 and quite frail. Looking back on this time in the king's life, Joinville recalled having to carry him into a Franciscan residence one day because he was too weak to walk in under his own power.⁷⁸ How could this man lead the forces of Christendom into battle against Baybars? Clement also knew that any crusade involving the king was likely to be slow to get going. Louis had taken the cross for his first crusade in 1244 and had not reached Damietta until the spring of 1249. He could certainly mount a larger expedition than the one Clement was organizing, but could it reach the Holy Land in time to do any good? The pope was so reluctant to approve Louis's proposal that he wrote a letter urging him to reconsider. Shortly after, he had second thoughts about telling the most powerful king in Europe not to bother trying to save the kingdom of Acre. He had the first envoy chased down, and replaced his original cautionary message with a new one encouraging Louis to "carry out this praiseworthy proposition."⁷⁹

In March 1267, Jean of Joinville received a summons to attend on the king in Paris. When Joinville arrived on March 24, no one would tell him why Louis had asked all the leading barons of the realm to meet with him. Sick with a fever, Joinville fell asleep during Matins and dreamed of the king kneeling before an altar while churchmen clothed him in a chasuble of red serge (a thick woolen cloth, still favored by the Canadian Mounties). Joinville's priest would offer a gloomy interpretation of the vision. The chasuble represented the cross, red with Christ's blood, which Louis would take tomorrow to mark the beginning of his crusade. Inaugurated

⁷⁷ *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 351, 1509–11, 1110; Richard, *The Crusades*, p. 424.

⁷⁸ Joinville, pp. 584–6 (Smith, p. 329).

⁷⁹ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1139; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, pp. 20–1 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 114–15).

in blood, the campaign would achieve little.⁸⁰ Later that day, Joinville overheard more pessimism about the king's plans. Two members of the royal council shared their dread over what could happen to them and the country if Louis took the cross:

One of them said, 'Never believe me again if the king doesn't take the cross now.' And the other replied that, 'If the king does take the cross, this will be one of the saddest days there has ever been in France. For if we don't take the cross we'll lose the king, and if we do take the cross we'll lose God, since we would not be taking the cross for him, but out of fear of the king.'⁸¹

The cross-taking ceremony that took place the next day, March 25, gave the king his first chance to pile on the pressure. The papal legate, Simon of Brie, preached the cross, as was normal on these occasions. Exceptionally, Louis delivered an exhortation too. He appealed to the assembled barons and knights to avenge Christ's injuries in the Holy Land and called on them as Christians to retake their patrimony, "which had for so long been in the hands of infidels due to our own sins."⁸² Generalizing the redemptive narrative through which he seemed to understand his providential role, Louis demanded that the French nobility share in the duty of freeing the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Besides Louis himself, three of his sons took the cross that day. From many others, the response was less enthusiastic. Joinville refused, and accused those who advised Louis to go on crusade a second time of committing a mortal sin. The kingdom was at peace, Louis was too frail for the journey, and everything had gone to wrack and ruin since he left.⁸³ Joinville made these observations with the benefit of hindsight, but they still capture something of the initial bewilderment that many who were close to Louis expressed when he placed the crusader's cross on his shoulders again.

Louis's decision set the stage for a final showdown with Baybars, the man who had helped to defeat him at Mansura seventeen years before. Despite vast differences in background and leadership style, both men were united in their pursuit of holy war. Syria was the inevitable focus of this shared concern, promising Baybars the religious legitimation he required as an upstart and Louis the personal redemption he craved as a failed crusader. The ramifications of their struggle extended well beyond the two men. Egypt and France were placed on a war footing, with their subjects bound to increasingly elaborate codes of personal conduct and

⁸⁰ Joinville, pp. 582–4 (Smith, p. 328).

⁸¹ Joinville, p. 586 (Smith, p. 329).

⁸² Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 115).

⁸³ Joinville, p. 586 (Smith, p. 329).

piety. Victory in the holy struggle, both men believed, would only go to the united and the pure.

Not every ambitious ruler in the Mediterranean, however, subscribed to the ideology of elimination that drove Baybars and Louis to wage the battle for Syria. In Sicily and Tunis, two dynasts were embarking on a different kind of relationship, one that emphasized negotiation and exchange over all-out conflict. As planning for the new crusade got under way, these two contrasting systems of interreligious relations, one dedicated to confrontation along religious lines, the other to pragmatic accommodation across them, began to intersect in unexpected ways, extending the battle for Syria into the central Mediterranean and profoundly altering the character of the struggle in the process.

2

Al-Mustansir, Charles of Anjou, and the Struggle for the Central Mediterranean

SCIACCA: SEPTEMBER 1267

In the late summer of 1267, an expeditionary force prepared to launch from Tunis. It was led by Conrad Capece, the former Hohenstaufen military governor of Sicily, and Federico of Castile, a mercenary working for Hafsid Tunis who also happened to be the brother of the king of Castile. The Hohenstaufen loyalist and the glamorous exile assembled a motley crew—German soldiers, Tunisian archers, and a squad of Spanish mercenaries who called themselves the “knights of death”—crammed everyone on to two ships, and sailed for the south coast of Sicily.¹

They landed near Sciacca, about 40 miles west of Agrigento, and messengers spread throughout the island announcing the imminent arrival of the young Hohenstaufen claimant Conradin. Hoping to snuff out the revolt before it could spread beyond Sciacca, Sicily’s Angevin governor, Fulco of Puy-Richard, gathered his forces and set off in search of a decisive confrontation. He got the battle he wanted, but it did not go well for him. When some of Fulco’s Sicilian soldiers deserted at a crucial moment, his remaining troops were exposed to attack from Federico of Castile and his “knights of death.” They lived up to their name, at least in part. They killed as many of the Angevin soldiers as they could, but let the Sicilians escape so they could spread the word about the powerful army that had defeated the foreign occupiers and allowed the locals to go in peace. Within weeks of their landing, the insurgents from Tunis had spread the rebellion to every corner of the island. Only Palermo, Messina, and Syracuse, with their sizable Angevin garrisons, held out.²

¹ The vicar of Sicily was a kind of provincial governor: see Émile Léonard, *Les Angevins de Naples* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1954), p. 63; Karl Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins von Hohenstaufen* (Leipzig: Koehler Verlag, 1940; original edition 1894), p. 69.

² Saba Malaspina, pp. 190–2; Bartolomeus of Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, ed. Giuseppe Paladino, in *RIS*, vol. 13, part 3, p. 7; *Annales Placentini Gibellini*, ed. G. H. Pertz, in *MGH SS*, vol. 18, p. 530.

Louis IX of France had supported his brother's conquest of Sicily. The payoff was supposed to be access to a staging ground for the Holy Land crusade and military support from a newly empowered younger sibling. The uprising placed those plans in doubt. Before he could help the crusade, Charles would have to crush the Hohenstaufen once again. Just as importantly, he would have to deal with al-Mustansir, who was threatening Sicily from Tunis. The emir had signaled his unhappiness with regime change on the island by providing the Hohenstaufen exiles with refuge, a boat, archers, and several hundred mercenaries. He had also stopped paying a fee to access Sicily's wheat market. The relationship between Charles and al-Mustansir had begun badly: the progress of the crusade hinged on the resolution of their differences, whether by force or negotiated settlement.

AL-MUSTANSIR

The Hohenstaufen rulers of Sicily had been strategic partners for the emir of Tunis. The Angevin conquest created a threatening dynamic for a Hafsid regime that relied on strong relationships with Mediterranean trading partners to hold onto power in Ifriqiya.³ The Hafsid dynasty endured into the sixteenth century in what is today a good chunk of Tunisia and Algeria. Al-Mustansir, though, was just the second emir in this long Hafsid line. He was not an entirely self-made man, like Baybars. Nor had he conquered a kingdom for himself, like Charles. But his challenge was great nonetheless. He had to ensure the survival of a young dynasty whose position in the power dynamics of the central Maghreb was uncertain.⁴

Al-Mustansir's father Abu Zakariya Yahya had founded the dynasty in 1229 when he broke away from the Almohad empire, which had given a

³ Essentially an Arabized version of "Africa," the old Roman province, Ifriqiya was the name given to a territory running from Tripoli in the east to Bijaya (Bougie) in the west and corresponding roughly to what we might think of today as a kind of "Greater Tunisia."

⁴ For the early Hafsids, see Rouighi, pp. 25–37; Maribel Fierro, "The Almohads (524–668/1130–1269) and the Hafsids (627–932/1229–1526)," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Michael Cook, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 87–94; Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 103–43; Atallah Dhina, *Les états de l'Occident musulman aux XIIIe, XIVe et XV siècles: Institutions gouvernementales et administratives* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1984); Abdallah Laroui, *The History of the Maghrib: An Interpretive Essay*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 201–42; Charles-André Julien, *History of North Africa: From the Arab Conquest to 1830*, ed. and rev. Roger Le Tourneau, English trans. John Petrie, ed. C. C. Stewart (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 138–219; Brunschvig, vol. 1: pp. 1–70.

certain political coherence to the Maghreb since the mid-twelfth century. Abu Zakariya was actually a rebel in the name of tradition. He claimed to act out of loyalty to Almohad teachings. While the caliph in Marrakesh was distancing himself from traditional Almohad doctrine, Abu Zakariya founded his legitimacy on rigid adherence to it.⁵ This legitimist stance allowed him to develop an initial constituency for his regime among the Berber Almohads who had come to Tunis from the western Maghreb in the mid-twelfth century. Soon, however, he had to reach out to new interest groups as he struggled to counteract challenges to his authority on two fronts. Externally, he had to contend with the expansionist aspirations of the other major North African powers that were emerging out of the breakup of the Almohad empire: the 'Abd al-Wadids of Tlemcen and the Marinids of Fez. Internally, he encountered opposition from entrenched local interests, not least from prominent Almohad families that resented a former peer lording it over them. These families often found support from Arab Bedouin tribes in the south, most notably the Dawawida.⁶ If al-Mustansir were to consolidate Hafsid power in Tunis, he would have to forge new alliances within and beyond his domains.

This reality was underscored for al-Mustansir shortly after he came to power in 1249, at the age of 20. He appointed as vizier Muhammad b. Abi Mahdi, a leading Almohad. The new vizier was determined to dominate the young emir and maintain Almohad control over the Hafsid state. When al-Mustansir tried to rule in his own name, Muhammad b. Abi Mahdi staged a coup with one of al-Mustansir's cousins. The plot failed, but not by much. The turning point came when the emir's supporters defeated the rebels in a pitched battle in a prayer hall (*musalla*) on the outskirts of Tunis. The vizier died during the fighting, his Hafsid front man was chased down and beheaded, and the homes of many prominent Almohads were pillaged and burned to the ground.⁷

After this close call, al-Mustansir recognized the need to diversify potential sources of support for his regime by reaching out to new interest groups. Rather than relying solely on the Almohads, he would build a network of alliances with neighboring powers to the south, west, and

⁵ For the Almohad caliph al-Ma'mun's repudiation of the teachings of the Almohad founder, Ibn Tumart, see Michael Lower, "The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century North Africa," *Speculum* 89 (2014): pp. 609–12.

⁶ Rouighi, pp. 34–5.

⁷ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 627–8 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 336–7); Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Zarkashi, *Tarikh al-dawlatayn al-muwahhidiyya wa-l-hafsiyya*, ed. Husayn Ya'qubi (Tunis: Librairie El Atika, 1998), pp. 70–1; translated as *Chronique des Almohades et des Hafsides*, ed. and trans. Edmond Fagnan (Constantine: Imprimerie Adolphe Braham, 1895), pp. 44–5.

north. To begin with, al-Mustansir tried to boost his reputation in the eyes of potential rivals and negotiating partners by enhancing his prestige. He built a massive hunting park near Bizerte (about 40 miles north of Tunis), which he filled with wild animals that his entourage could hunt on horseback, sometimes with falcons. Even more intimately connected to the politics of grandeur that al-Mustansir promoted was a great pavilion he constructed in the front courtyard of the royal palace in Tunis. On religious holidays and during troop reviews, he would sit enthroned before the ceremonial entryway to the complex. Just outside the city, al-Mustansir cultivated an enormous pleasure garden called Abu Fihir. It was filled with fruit trees that produced olives, dates, lemons, oranges, myrtle, and jasmine. The centerpiece was a water feature emptying into a basin that looked as big "as the sea." The canal that ran down into it was impressive enough that the women of the court preferred racing each other in baskets through the waterway to quiet strolls along its banks.⁸

Al-Mustansir's most ambitious attempt to elevate his standing came in 1253, when he assumed the caliphal title *amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the believers) and adopted the regnal name al-Mustansir bi-llah (one who seeks victory through God). From emir to caliph was quite a (self) promotion, but the situation in the Islamic Mediterranean favored the move. The Marinids were pressing the Almohads in the western Maghreb, while the Mongols were threatening the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad. Five years later, the gambit would pay off with the wider recognition al-Mustansir craved. In 1258 a Sufi from Murcia named Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Haq b. Sibayn was living in Mecca under the protection of its governor, the *sharif* Abu Nami. Ibn Sibayn had sought out the sanctuary of the Ka'ba after his unorthodox theological views had got him in trouble with religious scholars in Tunis. He befriended Abu Nami and promoted the idea that Mecca should acknowledge al-Mustansir's sovereignty. This view gained traction when the Mongols sacked Baghdad and eliminated the Abbasid caliphate in February 1258. Shortly after this collective trauma for Sunni Islam, Ibn Sibayn wrote the letter that officially recognized al-Mustansir as the most important political and religious authority in the Islamic world.⁹

Al-Mustansir's exclusive hold on the title did not last long. In 1261, Baybars restored the Abbasid caliphate under his patronage in Cairo.¹⁰

⁸ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 628–31 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 338–40); Paul Sebag, *Tunis: Histoire d'une ville* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), p. 133.

⁹ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 634–51 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 343–6); al-Zarkashi, *Tarikh al-dawlatayn*, p. 71 (*Chronique des Hafides*, pp. 45–6, 51).

¹⁰ Thorau, pp. 111–14. For the scholarly debate over the nature and significance of this restored Abbasid caliphate under the aegis of the Mamluks, see Peter M. Holt, "Some

These competing claims to the caliphate would prove a source of tension between the two rulers. In any case, by the early 1260s al-Mustansir was complementing his prestige policy with pragmatic state building. To develop the administrative capacity of his government and provide a counterweight to the traditional Almohad preponderance, he brought Andalusis into court in such numbers that Ibn Khaldun could speak of a “crowd” of them surrounding the monarch. During the mid-thirteenth century, as the Christian monarchies of the Iberian Peninsula drove south, many elite Muslim men from al-Andalus found themselves deprived of careers when the *reconquista* swept away the regimes they served. Ibn Khaldun knew of what he spoke: he belonged to one of the many prominent Andalusi families that resettled in the Maghreb. As the heirs to a sophisticated cultural heritage, the immigrants from Iberia proved irresistible to North African dynasties looking for literate bureaucrats and courtiers. The Hafsids were no exception: Andalusis would go on to serve them for generations as chancery secretaries, treasury officials, provincial governors, judges, poets, religious scholars, and historians.¹¹

The integration of Andalusi intellectuals into Hafsid administration and court culture was not seamless. Though valued for their scholarly and artistic accomplishments, they could not be seen to rival the emir’s preeminence in these domains. Over the course of his reign, al-Mustansir would respond savagely to threats to his status as the cultural arbiter in Tunis. After the Andalusi poet and chancery official Ibn al-Abbar repeatedly criticized al-Mustansir’s taste in verse during evening recitals, his room was searched and a poem was (conveniently) found that began:

In Tunis a foolish tyrant reigns
Who is wrongly called a caliph.

Ibn al-Abbar was duly arrested and executed as a traitor.¹² The Andalusi teacher and grammarian Ibn ‘Asfur met his end after he ventured a misjudged bit of banter while walking with the emir by the pool in the Abu Fihir pleasure garden. To al-Mustansir’s remark that “Our majesty has become great this morning!” Ibn ‘Asfur replied, “Yes, thanks to us and our like!” Offended by this presumption, al-Mustansir had the grammarian thrown into the deep, cold water. He was able to struggle out after a while, but came down with a chill and died several days later.¹³ Sometimes

Observations on the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): pp. 501–7.

¹¹ On Ibn Khaldun’s family background, see Rouighi, pp. 152–6.

¹² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 652–5 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 347–50).

¹³ Al-Zarkashi, *Tarikh al-dawlatayn*, pp. 82–3 (*Chronique des Hafsides*, pp. 53–4).

fulfilling but just as often confounding the expectations of the dynasts they served, Andalusis played an ambiguous role in medieval North African history.

Even with a strengthened bureaucracy in place, Hafsid control of the countryside was never complete. The Dawawida tribe especially, but also the Mirdas, Dabbab, Ku'ub, and Sadwikish, repeatedly challenged dynastic rule, sometimes in conjunction with a disaffected Almohad shaykh or Hafsid prince, at other times in temporary alliance with one another. With the countryside failing to provide dependable income to the government, al-Mustansir had to look outward for revenue. Taking advantage of Tunis's prime Mediterranean location, he gave Hafsid Ifriqiya a strong commercial orientation.

Situated about half way between Egypt and Morocco, Tunis was a popular stopping point for caravan traffic between the two regions. It was also a natural halt for east–west shipping. Sicily, a gateway to Europe, lay just 40 miles across the water and could be reached in a small boat. The narrowness of the Sicilian Straits gave Tunis the potential to control maritime traffic between the eastern and western Mediterranean, placing it in an excellent position to attract European merchants.

The Almohads had signed trade agreements with Genoa and Pisa in the twelfth century. After establishing his independence in 1229, Abu Zakariya expanded commercial opportunities for his subjects, building markets and merchant factories (*funduks*) for Muslim traders and signing trade deals with northern Mediterranean powers. A treaty with Marseille was in place by 1231, followed by agreements with Venice, Pisa, and Genoa over the next five years.¹⁴

Under al-Mustansir, the commercial orientation of Hafsid foreign policy became more pronounced. He renewed the trade agreements with Genoa, Venice, and Pisa, and extended the reach of Hafsid economic expansion beyond the Mediterranean basin. In 1257, envoys from the ruler of Kanem-Bornu in the Sudan initiated contact with al-Mustansir by sending him a giraffe, which caused a stir when it was paraded through Tunis. Several years later, the emir received an ambassador from King Haakon the Old of Norway. The two monarchs may have negotiated yet another commercial treaty for the expanding Tunisian economy.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Traités*, pp. 28, 31–5 (Pisa), 89–90 (Marseille), 108, 116–18 (Genoa), 196–9 (Venice); Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 128–9; Brunschvig, vol. 1: pp. 27–9; *L'Espagne catalane*, pp. 93–4.

¹⁵ *Traités*, pp. 43–7 (Pisa), 118–21 (Genoa), 199–202 (Venice); Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 652 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 346–7); Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 50.

These treaties aimed to promote trade and ensure that the Hafsid treasury profited from it. The Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani tells a story that illustrates this fiscal imperative. Villani says that al-Mustansir favored Pisan merchants over all others until one day he noticed a glimmer of gold nestled among a pile of Pisan silver coins. When he asked what it was, the Pisan merchants told him it was a florin, a gold coin that had just been minted in Florence for the first time. Duly impressed, al-Mustansir wanted to learn more about the city that could produce such a magnificent specimen. He tracked down a Florentine merchant, who filled his ears with the wonders of his hometown. Al-Mustansir offered to build a *funduk* and church for the Florentines if they would bring their business (and gold florins) to Tunis.¹⁶

The texts of the trade treaties help to fill in some of the details behind stories such as this. Hafsid fiscal concerns shine through the treaty agreed with Genoa in 1250. It called for Genoese merchants to pay 10 percent duty on imports and 5 percent on exports. An exception was made for wood, which due to its military value could be sold to the Hafsid and its allies duty free. The Genoese also had to carry out their transactions through Tunisian intermediaries, who charged fees for their services. Trade was restricted to specific commercial zones to ensure that customs duties and fees were not evaded. The first provision of the treaty of 1250 required Genoese merchants to trade “in those places in which [they] were accustomed to go for the sake of business.” They were forbidden to travel elsewhere in Hafsid lands except “out of urgent necessity.” In the case of shipwreck, for example, the survivors could come ashore to seek shelter, but they could not trade while they waited to be rescued.¹⁷

Among the Hafsid cities where European traders could legally conduct business were al-Mahdiya, Bijaya, Gabès, Sfax, and Tripoli. The most important commercial center was Tunis, where all the major European maritime powers established *funduks*. The Italian maritime republics vied with each other to see who could have the most elaborate amenities, which often included living quarters, a customs house, storage facilities, shops, taverns, chapels, cemeteries, and ovens. When Genoa asked if it could expand its *funduk*, Pisa asked if it could build a bigger one too, with a larger wall that would keep people from passing directly from the one complex to the other. The European merchants did in fact live cheek by jowl in Tunis. All the *funduks* were grouped together just outside the Bab

¹⁶ Giovanni Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine di Giovanni Villani*, ed. Achille Mauri (Milan: Nicolò Bettoni e comp., 1834), p. 92; Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, p. 130.

¹⁷ *Traité*s, pp. 118–21.

al-Bahr (the “sea gate”), from which one exited the city to reach the main port on the lake of Tunis. This arrangement reflected not only merchant interest in staying close to the sea, but also Hafsid concern to monitor and tax their trading. Their *funduks*, in fact, belonged to the regime, and should not be confused with the foreign merchant colonies that would emerge in the early modern period.¹⁸

Economic expansion was essential to increasing the reach of the Hafsid state. Al-Mustansir relied on customs revenue to build his army. For him, military strength lay in diversity, not unity. Although Ibn Khaldun would later argue that *‘asabiyya*, or group solidarity, was the key to success on the battlefield in North Africa, al-Mustansir viewed the concentration of power in the hands of any one group as a threat. His father had relied on Almohad Berber and Bedouin tribes to fight his battles. Al-Mustansir could not afford to abandon these traditional sources of support, but he could reduce his reliance on them by hiring paid troops as well. He found these professional soldiers in al-Andalus, southern Italy, and the kingdoms of Christian Spain.¹⁹

Al-Mustansir’s mercenary guard first emerges into the historical light of day in the mid-1250s, when documents begin to refer to Guillem Moncada, a Catalan noble who served as its first commander (*qaʿid* in the Arabic sources, *alcayt* in the Catalan). He arrived in Tunis at the head of seventy knights from the Crown of Aragon in 1257. The Hafsid treasury paid each knight monthly wages ranging from 45 to 90 silver bezants, while the *qaʿid* earned 2,000 to 3,000. We do not know how many knights served in the guard. But even if we assume a number no greater than the seventy whom Guillem Moncada brought with him in 1257, and combine that with the low end of the pay scale, we arrive at a hefty annual wage bill of 61,800 silver bezants for the Catalan contingent alone. The actual total was likely to have been higher because other Europeans, such as Enrique and Federico of Castile, also served in the guard.²⁰

¹⁸ Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, p. 129; Sebag, *Tunis*, p. 131.

¹⁹ For medieval European mercenaries in North African armies, see Michael Lower, “Medieval European Mercenaries in North Africa: The Value of Difference,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 14 (2016): pp. 108–10; Lower, “Christian Mercenaries in Muslim Lands: Their Status in Medieval Islamic and Canon Law,” in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 419–33; Lower, “The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century North Africa,” *Speculum* 89 (2014): pp. 601–31; and Simon Barton, “Traitors to the Faith? Christian Mercenaries in al-Andalus and the Maghreb, c.1100–1300,” in *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence: Studies in Honour of Angus MacKay*, ed. Roger Collins (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 23–45.

²⁰ Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, cancelleria reial, register 9, f. 15r.; *L’Espagne catalane*, pp. 102–3; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 652 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 347).

The pay structure of the guard provided the Crown of Aragon with a cut of each Catalan-Aragonese knight's salary, presumably as compensation for permitting their absence from the realm. The crown took 15 silver bezants a month from each knight and up to 1,000 a month from the *qa'id*. Working from the same estimate of seventy knights, we find an impressive amount of hard cash flowing from Tunis to Barcelona: some 24,600 silver bezants a year.

These European fighting men provided al-Mustansir with military force that was independent of local networks of power. Unlike an Almohad or Bedouin shaykh, a mercenary captain was bound to the ruler alone, and the religious difference insured that however influential he might become, he could not actually supplant the ruler and take power himself. He could be the power behind the throne, but he could never be the power *on* it. Moreover, because European mercenaries retained ties with their home countries, they could serve as diplomatic intermediaries. In many ways, the mercenary guard opened up the Hafsid regime to external influences as never before. It brought European Christians into court, in close physical proximity to the ruler; it required diplomatic relations with the Crown of Aragon, because some of the soldiers were recruited through a contractual arrangement with King Jaume I; and it strained the treasury enough to ensure that al-Mustansir would continue promoting revenue-generating foreign trade.

The contacts al-Mustansir developed beyond his borders were essential to expanding Hafsid power within Ifriqiya. His regime's urban orientation, relatively feeble presence in the countryside, and only intermittent support from Almohad and Bedouin interests encouraged him to integrate into Mediterranean networks of interreligious exchange. As crucial as they were to the Hafsid dynastic project, these networks posed challenges of their own. Hafsid relations with Sicily, the dynasty's closest European neighbor, were especially important, and fraught.

TUNIS AND SICILY BEFORE 1266

Ifriqiya and southern Italy had entangled histories in the Middle Ages. Initially, the links were political and demographic. The Aghlabids, a Sunni dynasty that ruled Ifriqiya in the name of the Abbasid caliphate, launched a slow conquest of Sicily in 827 that lasted for much of the ninth century.²¹ A significant Muslim population put down roots there as a

²¹ Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Sicily* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 10–41.

result, which added to the island's already high degree of ethno-religious diversity. In the 1060s, taking advantage of conflicts among the rulers of Agrigento, Catania, and Syracuse, Norman mercenary soldiers began their own protracted conquest of Sicily and the southern Italian mainland, which extended into the early 1090s. By 1130, the Normans had forged their holdings into the kingdom of Sicily, known as the *Regno* because it was the only monarchy of the medieval Italian Peninsula. Norman rule did not extinguish Sicily's religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Large Muslim communities continued to thrive there deep into the twelfth century, even as the Normans began to expand into Ifriqiya. After establishing tenuous control over Tripoli, al-Mahdiya, and Gabès, King Roger II of Sicily was hailed briefly as *malik Ifriqiya*: "king of Africa."²²

Norman Africa disintegrated in the face of the Almohad conquest of Ifriqiya in 1160. The Almohads broke the direct political link between Sicily and North Africa, but they maintained diplomatic relations with the Normans and kept in place the economic ties that had been developing across the Sicilian Straits from the late tenth century onwards. The foundation of the economic relationship was an exchange of wheat and gold. Both regions had produced grain in antiquity. Sicily remained a breadbasket of the medieval Mediterranean, growing a hard variety of wheat that traveled well by sea. Yields were relatively high by thirteenth-century standards and Sicilian wheat found its way into not just bread but couscous, ship's biscuit, and pasta. Ifriqiya reduced its wheat production in the medieval period, for reasons that are still not clear. Traditionally, the reduction has been blamed on two tribes of Arab nomads—the Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym—that entered Ifriqiya in the 1050s and are thought to have devastated Maghrebi agriculture through their raiding and plundering. Deprived of their accustomed supply, and confronted by widespread famine, the Zirid rulers of Tunisia are supposed to have had no choice but to turn to Sicily for grain. Although evidence for Ifriqiyān wheat production in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is sparse and difficult to interpret, it seems likely that the impact of this nomadic incursion has been exaggerated. A more plausible reconstruction of Ifriqiyān–Sicilian economic relations would emphasize the development of an interdependent commercial zone in the central Mediterranean, featuring specialization and the production of cash crops for market rather than subsistence agriculture. As Sicily increased its wheat crop, it also

²² David Abulafia, "The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean," in *Anglo-Norman Studies VII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1984*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1985), pp. 26–49.

produced silk, sugar, and cotton for export. Ifriqiya saw rapid urbanization, craft specialization, emerging leather production, and the development of alternate cash crops, particularly olive oil, and an uninterrupted flow of gold into the region from trans-Saharan trade. All this gave Ifriqiya the financial clout to buy wheat from Sicily and there are increasing signs of this practice from the late tenth century onward—in other words, from before the Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym had arrived in Ifriqiya.²³

Relations between Sicily and Ifriqiya remained close and contentious as the Hafsids supplanted the Almohads and the Normans made way for the Hohenstaufen in the early thirteenth century. Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen had ambitions to rule in Germany, northern and southern Italy, and the Holy Land. Despite these wide-ranging commitments, or rather precisely because of them, he regarded Ifriqiya as strategically vital. Ifriqiya was a market for Sicilian wheat, and Sicilian wheat was a source of funding for the Hohenstaufen war machine. As Frederick looked to finance his wars, he squeezed the Sicilian cash cow harder and harder. He increased the amount of his own land under wheat cultivation and sold the surplus abroad to his own profit. At the same time, he imposed export duties on whatever wheat was sold from private estates. Frederick had a strong fiscal incentive to maintain a stable economic partnership with Ifriqiya.²⁴

In the early years of his reign, though, threats to that stability emerged. North African slavers increasingly looked to Sicily to capture the products of their trade. More importantly still, in the late twelfth century a Muslim revolt broke out against the Sicilian monarchy. Under increased pressure to convert to Christianity and resenting encroachment on their semi-autonomous holdings in western Sicily, many Muslim communities on the island took advantage of the rocky transition from Norman to Hohenstaufen rule to test the strength of the new regime. As the revolt dragged on, the rebels looked to Ifriqiya for arms, money, and soldiers. In addition

²³ David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 14–16; Abulafia, “The Crown and the Economy under Roger II and His Successors,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): pp. 3–5; Idris Hady-Roger, *La Bérberie orientale sous les Zirides* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1962), p. 663; Michael Brett, “Ifriqiya as a Market for Saharan Trade from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century AD,” *Journal of African History* 10 (1969): pp. 348–53. In importing vital foodstuffs for cash, Tunis was very much like Genoa, which also outgrew its agricultural hinterland in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries and looked to international markets to make up the shortfall.

²⁴ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 214–25; James M. Powell, “Economy and Society in the Kingdom of Sicily under Frederick II: Recent Perspectives,” in *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen*, ed. William Tronzo (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1994), pp. 266–9; Powell, “Medieval Monarchy and Trade: The Economic Policy of Frederick II in the Kingdom of Sicily (A Survey),” *Studi Medievali* 3.3 (1962): p. 523.

to the economic dimension, relations with Ifriqiya were now bound up in a larger crisis of sovereignty in the *Regno*.²⁵

In 1221, as Frederick looked to re-assert control over Sicily, he dispatched the imperial ambassador Vibald to Tunis. Vibald's negotiating partner was the Hafsid prince Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, who was serving as governor of the city for the Almohad caliph in Marrakesh. On August 5, 1221, Vibald and Abu Ishaq reached an agreement on a treaty of peace and commerce.²⁶ The agreement is notably even-handed. It called for free trade for ten years, ensuring Sicily access to its major export market and Tunis access to its main wheat supplier. It addressed Frederick's security concerns by taking measures against the Tunisian pirates who preyed on Sicilian shipping and supported the Muslim revolt on the island. At the same time, the treaty guaranteed secure navigation to Tunisian ships sailing between Ifriqiya and Egypt. Captives on both sides would be freed.

The treaty of 1221 marked a moment of equilibrium in Tunisian–Sicilian relations. Over the next two decades, the balance would shift slightly toward the Hohenstaufen. The Hafsids lost a source of leverage when Frederick II took drastic measures to suppress the Muslim revolt on Sicily. In 1223 he began to deport entire communities of Sicilian Muslims off the island, settling them in Lucera on the mainland. The expulsions would continue for years, resulting in the relocation of about 15,000 to 20,000 people. In the meantime, with the rebellion quashed, the Hafsids could no longer demonstrate their strength by destabilizing Hohenstaufen rule over Sicily. Another difficulty for the Hafsids was that Ifriqiya began to experience grain shortages in the 1230s. These shortages do not appear to have been long-standing. Abu Zakariya's commercial treaty with Venice in 1231 allowed Venetian merchants to export eight boatloads of wheat from Ifriqiya if their home city was experiencing a shortfall. It seems unlikely that exports on this scale would have been permitted during a famine. In 1236, the emir allowed the Genoese to export five boatloads if Genoa was lacking in foodstuffs. The smaller quantity could reflect Genoa's less favorable trading status compared to Venice, but it might also be the result of diminishing grain stocks in Tunis.²⁷

²⁵ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 143–8; Metcalfe, *Muslims of Medieval Italy*, pp. 280–7; Brian Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c.1050–1614* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 122.

²⁶ James M. Powell, "Genoese Policy and the Kingdom of Sicily 1220–1240," *Medieval Studies* 28 (1966): p. 347; *Traités*, pp. 153–5. Mas Latrie dates the agreement to 1231; I follow the 1221 date proposed by Brunschvig in his "Note sur un traité conclu entre Tunis et l'empereur Frédéric II," *Revue Tunisienne* 34 (1932): pp. 153–60.

²⁷ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 146–8; Metcalfe, *Muslims of Medieval Italy*, pp. 283–5; *Traités*, pp. 196–9, 116–18.

In the winter of 1239–40, as his military expenses in northern Italy mounted, Frederick began to supervise Sicilian trade with Tunis closely. He appointed a consul to manage the crown's affairs in Tunis, then ordered a Sicilian port official to buy grain for the crown and ship it to Tunis and other North African cities where demand was strong due to scarcity.²⁸ Until the crown's ships had embarked, no other merchants would be allowed to export Sicilian wheat to the Maghreb. Around the same time, Nicola Spinola, the admiral of the Sicilian fleet, sold 50,000 *salme* of imperial grain in Ifriqiya.²⁹

THE "TUNISIAN TRIBUTE"

As the Hohenstaufen stepped up grain imports to Tunis, Abu Zakariya may also have agreed to pay Frederick an annual fee. Great uncertainty surrounds this payment, which would become known in European sources as the Tunisian Tribute. The main problem is lack of evidence. The Tunis–Sicily treaty of 1221 does not mention any payments by the Hafsids to the Hohenstaufen. A southern French chronicler states that Abu Zakariya drew up a charter recording his commitment to pay tribute and that this document was lodged in the Hohenstaufen archive in Palermo.³⁰ This charter, if it ever existed, does not survive today. The only genuinely contemporary source for the tribute is the Sicilian chronicler Saba Malaspina. His description is precise. He calls it:

an annual rent or tax, which [the king of Tunis] was supposed to pay annually to the king of Sicily, so that foodstuffs might be brought freely into Tunis and Arabs might be able to cross the Sicilian Sea securely when they wanted and the people of Barbary might not be vexed by Sicilian pirate attacks.³¹

Though Saba does not say when this annual payment started, his description of it fits well with the situation facing Abu Zakariya and Frederick II in 1239–40. Given Frederick's need for cash, his intervention into the Sicilian grain market, and his new position of strength in Sicily, he could have demanded a sweetener from Abu Zakariya to authorize large shipments of wheat to North Africa; and given the emir's reduced ability to

²⁸ Brunshvig, vol. 1: pp. 35–6; *Historia diplomatica Friderici secundi*, ed. Jean L. A. Huillard-Bréholles, 6 vols (Paris: Henri Plon, 1852–61), vol. 5: p. 793; Powell, "Economy and Society," p. 263.

²⁹ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, p. 332; for the medieval North African wheat trade, see Roughi, pp. 84–5.

³⁰ *Majus chronicon Lemovicense*, in *RHGF*, vol. 21: p. 776.

³¹ Saba Malaspina, pp. 228–9.

cause mischief on the island, the importance of keeping the waters around Tunis open to maritime traffic, and a momentary but still urgent shortfall in grain stocks, he could have agreed to pay it.

Even so, this commitment did not make Abu Zakariya a tributary to Sicily in the modern sense of the term. Tributaries do not receive anything for the tribute they pay, except for the privilege of not being attacked. But the emir acquired access to the best wheat the central Mediterranean had to offer, at a time when Frederick was restricting its availability as he edged closer to monopolistic control of his prized product. Relief from pirate attacks, or at least legal grounds to compensation for them, was another benefit of the arrangement. Those who demand tribute also expect political compliance. Abu Zakariya, however, retained his independence. In the winter of 1239–40, Frederick's enterprising Admiral Spinola hatched a plan to attack Venetian and Genoese vessels as they returned from the Levant during the spring passage. Describing his idea to the emperor, he wondered what to do about the "king of Tunis," who continued to welcome Venetians and Genoese in his lands despite their status as Frederick's enemies. The emperor's response was measured. He would dispatch envoys to Tunis and the admiral should not take any action until they could offer a recommendation.³² In Frederick's eyes, the Hafsids still had to be dealt with carefully.

Despite growing Hohenstaufen assertiveness, Tunis and Sicily remained bound in a relationship of mutual interdependence. Frederick's death in 1250 would place the Hafsid–Hohenstaufen partnership under strain. Frederick's son Conrad faced opposition to his succession in the kingdom of Sicily from the papacy and died in 1254. His half-brother Manfred succeeded him, first as regent for Conrad's young son Conradin and then as king of Sicily in his own name in 1258. Manfred and al-Mustansir maintained diplomatic relations, with Sicilian ambassadors visiting Tunis in 1265 and 1266.³³ The Angevin conquest of 1266, however, marked a break from the status quo: who was the new lord of Sicily, and how would he approach Tunis?

CHARLES OF ANJOU

Charles's background is incongruous. He was born into royalty, but his position in the family meant that at first he gained about as little from such a rank as one can imagine. He was the youngest child of King Louis VIII

³² *Traités*, pp. 155–6.

³³ *RCA*, vol. 1: p. 107 (Lefevre, no. 3).

of France (r. 1223–6) and Queen Blanche of Castile (1188–1252). He may have been born posthumously. With at least four brothers in line for preferment ahead of him, he was pegged for a career in the church. His original given name, in fact, may have been Étienne, the popular choice among French aristocratic families at the time for sons destined for the cloth. If he later changed his name to Charles, in a nod to Charlemagne, it would be a clue to the scale of his worldly ambitions.³⁴

Tall, olive complexioned, and with a long nose that would become an Angevin trademark, Charles projected an austere image to his contemporaries. He dressed and spoke plainly, just like his brother Louis IX. But while Louis could leaven his severity with warmth and humor, Charles was remembered as a bit of a cold fish. Tommaso of Pavia “heard a man from Paris say that even early in his youth he scarcely ever smiled.” With a thirteen-year age gap between them, the brothers were not close.³⁵

Even so, the first steps in Charles’s remarkable rise owed a great deal to Louis’s generosity. Departing from Capetian custom, Louis VIII had granted his younger sons sizable inheritances and made them princes of the realm. When an older brother died before taking up his *appanage*, Charles received it in his place. In August 1246, Louis IX granted Anjou and Maine to Charles, who had only just been knighted the previous May.³⁶

The year 1246 was something of an *annus mirabilis* for Charles. The year before, Raymond Berenger, count of Provence, had died sonless. According to his will, the county was supposed to go to his youngest daughter, Beatrice.³⁷ Several prospective spouses for Beatrice soon presented themselves, but the executor of the will, Pope Innocent IV, agreed to Louis’s proposal that Charles should marry her. While Innocent wanted Louis’s support in deposing Frederick II, Louis hoped the marriage would consolidate the

³⁴ Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship, and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 10; Peter Herde, *Karl I von Anjou* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1979), p. 25. Charles’s birthdate and family position are uncertain. He may or may not have had an older brother born about a year before him named Étienne who died in childbirth. If he did, then he was likely born in early spring 1227 and given the name Charles; if he did not, he may have been born about a year earlier, named Étienne, and then later changed his name to Charles, signaling his rejection of an ecclesiastical career.

³⁵ David Abulafia, “Charles of Anjou Reassessed,” *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): p. 93; *Thomae Tusci gesta imperatorum et pontificum*, ed. E. Ehrenfeuchter, *MGH SS*, vol. 22: p. 524; quoted in Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, 21.

³⁶ Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 13; Herde, *Karl I von Anjou*, p. 29.

³⁷ Raymond reasoned that his older daughters had received reward enough already through the favorable unions he had arranged for them. Eleanor had married Henry III, king of England, Sanchia had married Henry’s younger brother Richard of Cornwall, and Marguerite had married Louis IX.

Capetian presence in southern France. On January 31, 1246, with an escort of soldiers on hand to discourage objections, Beatrice and Charles celebrated their wedding.³⁸

Provence was a prize. One of its major cities was Marseille, a Mediterranean emporium that also hosted a naval arsenal. Provence produced many of the commodities that its merchants traded abroad, including grain, animal skins, honey, and wax. Most valuable of all was the salt that washed up at the mouth of the Rhône. Charles claimed a monopoly over it, much to Louis IX's displeasure. There was little Louis could do about it, though, because Provence was imperial territory and not under the lordship of the French crown.³⁹

Provence was too valuable to be easily won. The dowager countess, Beatrice, still claimed rights in the county and struggled against Charles to maintain them. It took ten years for him to convince her to accept an indemnity to renounce her claims. The larger cities banded together against the new count as well. Marseille, for example, held out against him until 1257.⁴⁰

Charles's hard-won mastery of Provence established him on the Mediterranean. Sicily offered something more: the chance for the last-born son of a king to become one in his own right. The particular kingdom he made his own was fabled for its wealth in the Middle Ages. The reality, though impressive, never quite lived up to the extravagant reputation. Sicily had strong economic potential, especially in agriculture, but it was not a wonderland flowing with milk and honey and could never have produced the inflated revenues that Charles seems to have expected. His increasingly frantic efforts to extract income from Sicilians provoked tensions that would explode in the Vespers revolt of 1282.⁴¹

Prosperous in its own right, Sicily also placed Charles at the center of the Mediterranean world. The kingdom gave him the potential to dominate the sea passages—and the commercial traffic that flowed through them—to the south, east, and west. Its location also offered an ideal base from which to launch campaigns of expansion. Charles was aware of the *Regno's* strategic potential, but his ambitions were not imperial per se. In

³⁸ Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 42; Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 47.

³⁹ Georges Lesage, *Marseille angevine: Recherche sur son évolution administrative, économique et urbaine de la victoire de Charles d'Anjou à l'arrivée de Jeanne I (1264–1348)* (Paris: E. Boccard, 1950), pp. 104, 107; Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, pp. 41–55.

⁴⁰ Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 48; Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 47; Herde, *Karl I von Anjou*, pp. 29–33.

⁴¹ Modern assessments of Sicily's economic potential in the Middle Ages have varied. See Abulafia, "Crown and the Economy," pp. 1–2; Powell, "Economy and Society," pp. 264–5.

fact, the papacy had brought him into Italy as an anti-imperialist: he was supposed to drive the German empire out of the peninsula and as a condition of conquest he had agreed to papal suzerainty over his new holdings.⁴² Above all, his aims were dynastic. Rather than reviving the western empire, his goal was to make Sicily the centerpiece of an agglomeration of lordships, territorial claims, and commercial relationships that would vault the Angevins into the first rank of Mediterranean powers.⁴³

What made the kingdom of Sicily so appealing also made it dangerous. Because it stood at the center of things, it could be threatened from several directions. From the north, there were the maritime republics of Genoa, Venice, and Pisa. Each wanted to penetrate and, to the extent that it could, control the Sicilian market. Pisa was a particular challenge because of its historic ties to the Hohenstaufen and its ambitions on nearby Sardinia. In the north, too, pockets of pro-imperial (Ghibelline) sympathy continued to flourish after Manfred's defeat at Benevento. The premise behind papal support for the Angevin conquest of the south had been to prevent the Papal States from being enveloped by a single power. But given the strength of Ghibelline enclaves such as Siena and Pisa, Charles could not hope to bring the *Regno* under control without intervening in northern Italy. After some initial hesitation, Clement IV came around to this way of thinking. In 1268, he granted Charles extensive powers to lead the pro-papal (Guelf) cause in Tuscany.⁴⁴

Another threat to Angevin Sicily lay to the west. The Crown of Aragon would prove to be Charles's greatest European rival in the western Mediterranean. It was a congeries of territories that encompassed Aragon, Catalonia, Andalusia down to Murcia, the Balearic Islands, and some towns north of the Pyrenees, including Perpignan and Montpellier. It shared similarities with the Angevin realms: a monarch with a military reputation; a vibrant commercial economy; and close involvement with the Maghreb, especially Hafsid Ifriqiya. It was also linked by marriage to the remnants of Hohenstaufen opposition to Charles. In 1258, Manfred's daughter Constance of Sicily had become betrothed to Pere, the son and heir of King Jaume I of Aragon. The Tunis Crusade was an important episode in the rivalry between the houses of Anjou and Aragon, a conflict that would eventually mushroom into what David Abulafia has called a "Two Hundred Years' War."⁴⁵

⁴² Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou Reassessed," p. 109.

⁴³ Borghese offers an important reevaluation of Charles's Mediterranean ambitions.

⁴⁴ Borghese, pp. 205–6; *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 98–100.

⁴⁵ David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London: Longman, 1997), p. xv.

The Crown of Aragon was a firm rival to Angevin interests in the western Mediterranean. To the east, the situation was more fluid. In 1261, Michael VIII Palaiologos, the Byzantine emperor in exile, had reconquered Constantinople from the heirs of the Latin Christian crusaders who had taken the city in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. Michael VIII posed an immediate threat to the remaining Latin powers in the Aegean—the duchy of Athens and the principality of Achaia—and to the despotate of Epiros, a hold-out Greek state on the Adriatic coast, in what is now Albania and northern Greece. The future of these regimes mattered a great deal to Charles. They represented both a buffer against Byzantine encroachments westward and a base for Angevin expansion eastward. From a coastal stronghold such as Durazzo, the route along the *Via Egnatia*, the old Roman road to Constantinople, lay open.⁴⁶

The kingdom of Sicily was central to Charles's ambitions and fears as a dynast. If he held on to it, he would have a springboard to future conquests; if he lost it, his Mediterranean holdings might implode. Over the long term, the best way to protect the kingdom would be to establish a perimeter of control around the *Regno* that incorporated Sardinia, the Adriatic coast, and North Africa. Before he could make headway on that goal, he would have to put down the revolt on Sicily that struck at the heart of his dynastic project.

CHOICES, CHOICES

Charles's invasion of Italy in 1266 brought momentary clarity to the peninsula's famously convoluted politics. For once, everyone would have to pick a side—Hohenstaufen or Angevin—and hope for the best. For some, family tradition or customary loyalties made the decision straightforward. For the outsiders—the adventurers, exiles, and mercenaries—the choice was much harder. Federico of Castile, as we have seen, had thrown his support behind the Hohenstaufen. Federico's brother and fellow exile Enrique, however, gambled on the Angevins, helping to bankroll Charles's campaign and fighting alongside him at the battle of Benevento. Even though Enrique of Castile came out on the winning side, he ended up disappointed with the result. Charles did not reward him for his role in the victory; nor did he even pay him back the money he owed. With no means

⁴⁶ Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 12–13; Borghese, pp. 205–6.

of support in Italy, and still out of favor in Castile, Enrique went deeper into exile, joining his brother (and recent opponent in battle) in Tunis.⁴⁷

From there, Enrique of Castile tried again to benefit from the Angevin conquest. He suggested to Charles that he could marry Helena of Epiros, King Manfred of Hohenstaufen's widow, who had fallen into Angevin custody after Benevento and who could claim Epiros as her inheritance. Given Epiros's strategic significance to the *Regno*, however, Charles was never likely to grant it to a Castilian adventurer, no matter how much money that adventurer had lent him in the past. Instead, Charles claimed Helena's inheritance for himself by right of conquest and appointed a captain-general to rule Corfu in his name.⁴⁸ Charles was equally unimpressed with Enrique's next proposal, which was that he become king of Sardinia. This was another strategically crucial island that Charles wanted to control directly, rather than through a potentially unreliable proxy.⁴⁹

Twice rejected, Enrique of Castile sailed from Tunis to Sicily in the early spring of 1267 to take up his case directly with Charles of Anjou. Not long after Enrique left Tunis, Conrad Capece arrived there on an embassy from Conradin, who wanted to coordinate with al-Mustansir on a two-pronged invasion of the *Regno*.⁵⁰ The emir had a difficult decision to make. Allowing prominent Hohenstaufen exiles to serve in his palace guard was one thing; sponsoring a full-fledged attack on Angevin Sicily was quite another. Charles had recently banned Ghibelline Pisan merchants from trading in Sicily. The question was whether he would extend this embargo to other states harboring pro-Hohenstaufen sympathies, such as the Hafsids emirate.⁵¹ If he did, the economic consequences for al-Mustansir and his subjects would be severe. An uprising on Sicily could topple the Angevin regime while it was still fragile and restore the old Hohenstaufen order, which, if not wholly favorable to Hafsids interests, was at least established and predictable. Then again, the consequences of a failed revolt could be catastrophic. If Charles identified al-Mustansir as an instigator, he might seek out reprisals, even to the point of military action in the Maghreb.

⁴⁷ *Sicilian Vespers*, p. 116; Herde, *Karl I von Anjou*, p. 51; Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 64.

⁴⁸ *RCA*, vol. 1: p. 29, no. 15 (Lefevre, no. 1); Sternfeld, pp. 31–4; Borghese, p. 11.

⁴⁹ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1165; David Abulafia, *A Mediterranean Emporium: The Catalan Kingdom of Majorca* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 235–52. In 1269, Charles would have his son Philip declared king of Sardinia.

⁵⁰ Bartolomeus of Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, p. 7; Saba Malaspina, p. 182; *Sicilian Vespers*, p. 120; Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins*, p. 189; Borghese, p. 31.

⁵¹ Sternfeld, p. 79.

The benefits of foreign intervention also had to be weighed against potential risks to domestic stability. Since the coup that greeted his accession, al-Mustansir had faced several further challenges to his authority. In 1253 alone, he confronted three separate uprisings: a coup launched by his brother Abu Ishaq with the aid of the Dawawida Bedouin; a revolt in Qasantina (Constantine, Algeria) led by the Banu Nu'man clan, Hintati Almohads who had governed the city for Abu Zakariya; and a Bedouin rebellion in the Zab inspired by the would-be messiah Abu Himara. Serious military resources were required to put these revolts down and a series of exemplary punishments and executions followed. The pattern of unrest continued into the 1260s, when the urban elite of Milyana took advantage of conflicts between the Hafsids and the 'Abd al-Wadids in western Ifriqiya to make a bid for autonomy. Al-Mustansir had to send his brother Abu Haf's and Enrique of Castile to take Milyana by siege. Meanwhile, the Dawawida continued to fend off the emir's attempts to encroach on their hegemony over the countryside around Qasantina. After they recognized yet another Hafsid pretender, al-Mustansir's cousin Abu al-Qasim, as emir, al-Mustansir campaigned against them in 1265–6. Under their shaykh Shibl b. Musa, they withdrew south of al-Masila, prompting the emir to give up the pursuit. With their capacity to strike against him still intact, al-Mustansir needed to keep troops on hand in case the Dawawida rose again. Under these circumstances, it would be difficult to send a large force to Sicily. As spring 1267 turned into summer, al-Mustansir deliberated, waiting for new developments that might prod him toward intervention or neutrality.⁵²

VITERBO: SPRING 1267

Enrique of Castile found himself in much the same predicament as the emir, uncertain whether to conciliate Charles or join his enemies. In April 1267, Enrique followed Charles up to Viterbo, where the popes kept a summer residence, for meetings with Clement IV. If Enrique hoped for a swift resolution of his difficulties, he was soon disappointed. He was not the only backer of the Sicilian conquest who was expecting compensation for his efforts. King Louis IX of France, having taken the cross for the Holy Land about a month before, sent two envoys to Viterbo to discuss his crusade with Charles and Clement. Henri of Constance, marshal of

⁵² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 631–4, 656–60 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 341–3, 352–7); Rouighi, pp. 34–5; Brunschwig, vol. 1: pp. 47–9.

France, and Guillaume, archdeacon of Paris, brought with them a list of questions for Charles to answer about his role in the campaign.⁵³ The discussions lasted until early May, leaving Enrique of Castile to cool his heels.

Louis's envoys began by asking for Charles's general advice about the Holy Land passage: what seemed best to him for the honor of God and Christendom? What arrangements should be made for transporting the army? Then they urged him to take the cross, "for the sake of example and to deter enemies of the faith by the fame of his name." The envoys left open whether Charles would fulfill his vow by joining the crusade in person: the pope would help him decide closer to the time whether he should go overseas or remain in the *Regno*. If Charles stayed home, the ambassadors wondered, could he provide galleys and soldiers from the kingdom of Sicily? And what assistance could he offer Louis and his men? Could Louis export animals for slaughter, beasts of burden, warhorses, and packhorses from Sicily without paying the usual tolls?

After sharing this list of demands, the envoys raised issues that Louis had put on hold during the Sicilian campaign. Most of them had to do with unpaid debts: 8,000 marks that Louis had paid on Charles's behalf to settle a provision of Count Raymond Berenger of Provence's will; another 8,000 marks to help secure Charles's marriage to Beatrice of Provence; and 30,000 *livres* that Louis had loaned Charles during the Egyptian crusade. Louis complained about how much the marriages of his children, the knighthood of a son, and the crusade were costing him and begged Charles to bear in mind the "great good" that had come to him (thanks in no small part, it was left unsaid, to his brother's aid). Finally, there was the *gabelle*: Charles's monopoly on salt from the Rhône. Louis demanded a written response from Charles about what he saw as a gross violation of the rights of the French crown.⁵⁴

As a cadet prince of the Capetian house, Charles had joined Louis's Egyptian crusade without complaint. Now that he was a king in his own right, he was not prepared to commit to the crusade so willingly. Following his meeting with Louis's envoys at Viterbo, he did not take the cross, offer help with transportation, supplies, or arms, or repay his debts. Like Enrique of Castile, Louis would have to wait.

It is often said that Charles refused to join his brother's crusade at first because he was fixated on conquering Byzantium. The details of the treaties he signed with the remaining Latin powers in the Greek East at

⁵³ Sternfeld, pp. 320–4 (appendix A, no. 5).

⁵⁴ Sternfeld, pp. 320–4 (appendix A, no. 5).

Viterbo in the spring of 1267, however, suggest a less ambitious agenda. Charles remained focused on protecting the *Regno* and constructing a defensive perimeter around it.

At the end of May 1267, he reached an agreement with Guillaume, prince of Achaia, a potential ally in the Adriatic. By the terms of the Treaty of Viterbo, the principality of Achaia became a kind of Angevin protectorate. In exchange for a promise to help defend his lands, Guillaume recognized Charles as his overlord, designated his daughter Isabelle as heir to the principality, and betrothed her to Charles's younger son, Philippe. If the couple did not produce offspring, Achaia would revert to Charles or his heir.⁵⁵ In the long term, this arrangement might eventually allow for Angevin expansion into the Greek East. The aim was probably not an immediate takeover: Guillaume would hold his lands for the rest of his life and Philippe of Anjou would have to predecease his father for Charles to become prince of Achaia in his own right. More immediately, the treaty would shore up the Latin presence on Byzantium's western frontiers and gain Charles military aid against the Hohenstaufen. The first concrete result of the Treaty of Viterbo, in fact, would be Prince Guillaume bringing soldiers to fight for Charles against Conradin in 1268.⁵⁶

Since part of the agreement with Guillaume called for suzerainty over Achaia to pass from Baudouin II, the former Latin emperor of Constantinople, to Charles of Anjou, an additional treaty was required. Baudouin had been doing the rounds of European courts since losing Constantinople to Michael Palaiologos in 1261, trying to drum up support for a reconquest bid. To date, he had not found any takers. He would have to pay a high price for what Charles offered him in May 1267. Charles agreed to fund an expedition of 2,000 mounted soldiers, which would campaign in the east for one year, but would not set out until 1273 at the earliest. Charles might participate personally, or send a son in his place. Either way, he would receive one-third of any territory regained. The treaty also featured a marriage alliance similar to the one agreed with Guillaume of Achaia: Baudouin's heir Philippe would marry Charles's daughter Beatrice. If no children resulted from the union, Charles would obtain the rights to the Latin empire. Finally, the treaty gave him legal title, at least from a Latin Christian perspective, to the Adriatic buffer zone that he wanted to create beside the *Regno*. Baudouin also ceded him rights of

⁵⁵ Jean Longnon, "Le traité de Viterbe entre Charles Ier d'Anjou et Guillaume de Villehardouin, prince de Morée (24 Mai 1267)," in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri*, 3 vols (Naples: L'Arte Tipografica, 1959), vol. 1: pp. 307–14.

⁵⁶ Borghese, p. 15.

lordship to the Albanian coastline from Durazzo to Corfu.⁵⁷ In return for a limited military commitment in the distant future (six years was a long time in the context of thirteenth-century lifespans), Charles placed his heirs, if not himself, in a position to benefit from the unlikely eventuality of a Latin reconquest of Constantinople.

Guillaume of Achaia was barely holding on in Latin Greece; Baudouin II had already lost everything. For them, allying with Charles of Anjou was a last attempt to fend off a resurgent Byzantium. The leader of the Greek revival, Michael VIII Palaiologos, seemed to have a military edge over the remaining Latin powers of the Aegean, but that could change if the papacy decided to commit crusading resources to the region. There was little fear of that happening while the Hohenstaufen threat remained active. Now that Sicily was in Angevin hands, however, Clement IV might want to revive interest in winning Constantinople back for Latin Christendom. During its brief existence, the Latin empire had sheltered a Latin ecclesiastical hierarchy in a region that had long been in schism with the western church. Reconquering Constantinople would restore that state of affairs; it might also provide a focus for Charles's ambitions, distracting him from other projects that posed a risk to papal interests, such as establishing Angevin control over northern Italy.⁵⁸ As Charles met with Guillaume of Achaia and Baudouin II, Michael Palaiologos sent envoys to Viterbo to forestall a revival of papal crusading plans for Latin Greece. The envoys reminded Clement that there was another way to bring eastern Orthodoxy into the papal fold: negotiated church union. Clement responded positively to this appeal. Without attempting to restrain Guillaume of Achaia and Baudouin II in any way, he opened up a line of communication with the Byzantine emperor, urging him to return to the unity of the church and listing the articles of faith to which he must subscribe for that to happen.⁵⁹

As these discussions went on, Enrique of Castile waited for his turn to come. In May 1267, he heard from Clement IV again, this time with an offer to mediate between him and Charles of Anjou. While Charles promised (again) to repay his debts, Clement proposed that Enrique marry a daughter of King Jaume I of Aragon.⁶⁰ Clement and Charles certainly would have been happy to see Enrique return to Spain. From there, it would be more difficult for him to nag them about unpaid debts and pursue various island kingdoms. But there was not much to recommend the idea from Enrique's point of view. He could not be certain that the marriage would go ahead, since Clement had not actually secured

⁵⁷ *RCA*, vol. 1: pp. 94–6, no. 3.

⁵⁹ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1201.

⁵⁸ Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 93.

⁶⁰ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1199.

Jaume's consent to the plan. Moreover, Jaume had a fully functioning male heir, so the union would not bring Enrique particularly close to the throne of Aragon.

Looking around for a better offer, Enrique found one in the pope's backyard. During much of the thirteenth century, Rome maintained a high degree of autonomy within the Papal States. The city often rose in revolt and the popes of that era became used to living in exile from the Apostolic See. The most important political office in the city was that of senator of Rome. Charles of Anjou had won election to the office in 1263, but Clement had forced him to resign it in the spring of 1266, shortly after the Sicilian conquest. This decision did not work out well for the pope, because it allowed the city's latent Ghibelline tendencies to blossom again. A fresh round of rebellions brought the senatorship to none other than Enrique of Castile. In July 1267, Enrique took up the office, as Runciman said, "with resentment in his heart."⁶¹

THE *REGNO* UNDER ATTACK

The fox was now loose in the hen house. Enrique extended his authority into the countryside around Rome and launched strikes across the northern frontier of the *Regno*. Then he wrote to Conradin, pledging his support in verse that combined hatred for Charles with virulent anti-Judaism: "By God, let him die who has given death to me and who keeps my wealth in his power, like a Jew."⁶² By the fall of 1267, the Hohenstaufen eagle was flying again above the walls of Rome.

While reaching out to Conradin, Enrique of Castile also reconciled with his brother Federico in Tunis. If al-Mustansir would allow Federico to launch an expedition against Sicily, the brothers could throw southern Italy into chaos. After hesitating for several months, al-Mustansir gave the go ahead. Charles and Clement's reversal of fortune in Rome may have convinced him that a Sicilian revolt could destabilize or perhaps even end Angevin rule in the central Mediterranean. Cautious in military matters, he did not commit to an overt Hafsid assault. Instead, he allowed Federico

⁶¹ Saba Malaspina, p. 184; Walter Gross, *Die Revolution in der Stadt Rom 1219–1254* (Berlin: Ebering, 1934; reprinted Vaduz: Kraus Reprints, 1965), pp. 28–39; Daniel Waley, *The Papal State in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 134–45; Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 61; *Sicilian Vespers*, p. 116.

⁶² Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins*, pp. 149–55, 199; Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 65; *Le antiche rime volgari*, ed. Alessandro d'Ancona and Domenico Comparetti, 5 vols (Bologna: Presso Gaetano Romagnoli, 1875–88), vol. 2: pp. 305–7.

to take the lead and limited his role to supplying some soldiers, mostly European, and a boat. This would allow him to maintain plausible deniability should the insurgency fail. As Fulco of Puy-Richard fled from Federico and the knights of death in early October 1267, it looked as if al-Mustansir's gamble might pay off.

With Rome under Ghibelline control, and Sicily up in arms, Conradin made his move. He had left Bavaria in mid-September 1267 and by mid-October had reached Verona, a Ghibelline stronghold. He waited there for several months, allowing the insurgencies in the south to develop.⁶³ Charles was hoping to intercept Conradin in Lombardy before he could link up with his allies in Rome and Sicily. In February 1268, however, the Muslim colony of Lucera, founded by Emperor Frederick II in Apulia to house the Sicilian Muslim communities he had driven off the island in the 1220s, rose in revolt.⁶⁴ Many of the Muslim men of Lucera had earned a living fighting in an elite Hohenstaufen crossbow unit and their military reputation remained high. While Charles had left the suppression of the Sicilian uprising to lieutenants, he decided to deal personally with the rebel Muslim soldiers. In March 1268, he withdrew from Tuscany to put Lucera to siege. The path south, to Rome and the *Regno*, now lay open to Conradin.

After receiving a rapturous welcome in Rome from Enrique of Castile, Conradin drove southeast toward Apulia, where his support was strongest.⁶⁵ By the time he reached Carsoli, about 30 miles west of Avezzano, Charles had already lifted the siege of Lucera and brought his army to Ovindoli, from where he could guard the road that led into Apulia.⁶⁶

The two armies met on August 23, 1268 on a plain between the villages of Albe and Magliano, about 7 miles east of Tagliacozzo, the town that would give the battle its name. A small stream that ran into the River Salto divided the two forces. Enrique of Castile was in command of the Hohenstaufen vanguard, which included the Castilian mercenaries he had brought with him from Tunis. They found a way across the stream and, with support from Galvano Lancia and his men, launched an assault on the main body of Charles's French troops that killed its commander, who was wearing Charles's coat when he fell. That commander, however, was actually Henri of Constance, marshal of France. Charles himself, with 1,000 armed horsemen, was still waiting in reserve, hidden from view

⁶³ Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins*, pp. 169–89; *Sicilian Vespers*, p. 122.

⁶⁴ Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 58; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom*, p. 124.

⁶⁵ Saba Malaspina, pp. 197–8; Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins*, pp. 211–62; *Sicilian Vespers*, p. 125.

⁶⁶ Herde, *Karl I von Anjou*, pp. 58–9; *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 126–7.

behind a nearby hill. Charles watched as his French soldiers fled the battlefield, pursued by Enrique and Galvano. The only Hohenstaufen forces remaining in the plain were Conradin, his Bavarian relations, and his household knights. Believing that Charles was dead and that they had won the victory, they were stunned when Charles's reserve force charged forward from its hiding place. Conradin fled with a few followers toward Rome, while the rest were taken into captivity.

As Enrique of Castile chased the French troops along the road to Apulia, he looked back and realized that all was not as it should be on the battlefield behind him. He wheeled around for the final reckoning with Charles that he craved. Enrique had not lost many men on his run through the battlefield into the road beyond. When Charles's military advisor, Érard of Valery, saw Enrique reverse course at the head of a large, well-armed corps, he recommended a tactic that he had seen the Mamluks use during his time leading the French regiment in Acre. Érard led his knights back toward the stream, as if to leave the field. Enrique's men charged toward him, but began to lose momentum as their horses tired. Érard's knights turned on Enrique in the classic conclusion to a Mamluk feigned retreat, seizing his horse and forcing him to run away, a humiliating end to his quest for revenge.⁶⁷

In the aftermath of his victory at Tagliacozzo, Charles rounded up many of his leading Hohenstaufen opponents. Enrique of Castile was tracked down to a local convent and taken away to jail. As the brother of the king of Castile, he would be hard to execute without diplomatic repercussions. As the last legitimate Hohenstaufen, Conradin enjoyed no such protection. He had tried to return to Rome after the battle, but the gates were closed to him. The Romans knew which way the wind was blowing now. He reached the coast, looking for passage to Genoa, but was captured before he could set sail. After a short trial for treason, Charles had the 15-year-old beheaded in Naples on October 29, 1268.⁶⁸

Conradin's death ended the Hohenstaufen push from the north, but the revolts in Sicily and Lucera continued. On August 27, 1269, after eighteen months of defiance, Lucera surrendered. Charles had the Christian residents killed but spared the lives of the Muslim soldiers, who

⁶⁷ On the battle of Tagliacozzo, see Saba Malaspina, pp. 202–8; *Sicilian Vespers*, pp. 126–32; Herde, *Karl I von Anjou*, pp. 58–62; Herde, "Die Schlacht bei Tagliacozzo: Eine historisch-topographische Studie," *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 25 (1962): pp. 679–744; Herde, "Taktiken muslimischer Heere vom ersten Kreuzzug bis 'Ayn Djalut und ihre Einwirkung auf die Schlacht bei Tagliacozzo (1268)," in his *Studien zur Papst- und Reichsgeschichte, zur Geschichte des Mittelmeerraumes und zum kanonischen Recht im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann Verlag), pp. 443–68.

⁶⁸ Saba Malaspina, pp. 209–15.

retained their military value and would, just a year later, serve him on the Tunis Crusade.⁶⁹

That left Sicily. Rumors that al-Mustansir was going to cross over to join the uprising there reached the Angevin justiciar of the island, who passed them along to Charles on the mainland. In response, Charles sent over more soldiers: 1,500 knights and “many archers and other fighters,” according to a contemporary chronicler.⁷⁰ At the same time, he declared an amnesty for all towns on the island still opposing him and promised that rebels who wished to leave the island could do so without impediment.

One city that refused to submit was Augusta, which lies on the east coast of Sicily between Catania and Syracuse. In August 1269, Charles sent a squadron of eight galleys to attack Augusta and appointed Guillaume L’Étendard general-vicar of Sicily with orders to crush the rebellion once and for all. Several weeks later, the city fell to him by treachery. On Charles’s orders, Guillaume had the entire population put to death.⁷¹

As Guillaume tightened the noose around Augusta, Charles kept an escape route open for some rebels. He renewed his amnesty call and offered special protection to foreigners who chose to flee Sicily. The target of this appeal seems to have been Federico of Castile and his knights of death. They took him up on the offer and returned to Tunis. Of the major rebel leaders, only Conrad Capece remained. As a former Hohenstaufen official on Sicily, he did not count as a foreigner and would not be spared if caught. With his dwindling band of followers, he was unable to prevent key coastal towns from going over to the Angevins: Augusta, Lentini, Agrigento, and even Sciacca, his original landing place and headquarters. He retreated to Centuripa, a stronghold far away from the sea. Betrayed by his own men, he was brought to Naples and beheaded with his brothers in the summer of 1270.⁷²

The contrasting fates of Federico of Castile and Conrad Capece can be explained partly by their relationships to the Hohenstaufen insurgency. One was a Castilian adventurer with no prior connection to Sicily, while the other was a loyalist to the old regime. Other factors may also have played into Charles’s willingness to allow Federico to escape back to Tunis. Hunting down and then executing a Castilian prince would have been diplomatically awkward. After Tagliacozzo, Charles

⁶⁹ Borghese, p. 19; Sternfeld, p. 109; Léonard, *Angevins de Naples*, p. 72.

⁷⁰ Sternfeld, pp. 325–6 (appendix A, no. 8): Charles of Anjou orders the justiciar of Bari to recover the goods of traitors who had supported Conradin in Monopoli, in Apulia; *RCA*, vol. 4; p. 175 (Lefevre, no. 9); *Annales Placentini Gibellini*, p. 530.

⁷¹ Sternfeld, p. 113; *RCA*, vol. 2: pp. 161–2, no. 630 (Lefevre, no. 28); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 106, no. 31 (Lefevre, no. 33); Saba Malaspina, p. 219, fn. 187, 220.

⁷² Sternfeld, p. 114; *Annales Placentini Gibellini*, p. 547.

had preferred to imprison rather than kill Federico's brother Enrique for the same reason. In Federico's case, however, Charles had gone further: he had actively encouraged his flight to Tunis. Once again, as with the Muslims of Lucera, Charles had shown leniency to an enemy of the faith, a man who had fought for Muslims and whom the contemporary chronicler Saba Malaspina could describe as "almost forgetful of the Christian religion," and differing "not at all from the Saracens in lifestyle and manners."⁷³ By facilitating his safe return to Tunis, Charles risked criticism for not combating Muslims and Muslim sympathizers. But this may have been a chance he was prepared to take, because he also knew that al-Mustansir would be happy to see the safe return of a valued member of his European mercenary guard.

Charles's approach to Tunis was shifting away from open conflict. By the summer of 1269, al-Mustansir was moving in the same direction. By what means we do not know, he let it be known to Charles that he was sending envoys to the *Regno*. On August 18, 1269, from the Angevin siege camp at Lucera, Charles instructed his officials in Sicily to receive the Tunisian ambassadors honorably and provide them with all the supplies they might need during their stay on the island. In the document, he referred to al-Mustansir as the "king of Tunis" and described him as *devotus noster*, "our faithful one."⁷⁴

For the past two years, the emir had been nothing of the sort. He had promoted an insurgency that had nearly robbed Charles of the centerpiece of his dynastic ambitions in the Mediterranean and had withheld money that Charles needed. To fund the conquest of Sicily, Charles had racked up enormous debts. Putting down the Hohenstaufen uprisings and the Hafsid proxy war had cost him an additional fortune on top of that. By the later stages of the siege of Lucera, Charles was so short of cash that he had to ask Clement IV for a postponement in paying part of the annual tribute he owed the Apostolic See as a condition of becoming a papal vassal for Sicily. The funding shortfall prompted heavy taxation on his new subjects, which in turn made them more receptive to appeals to restore the Hohenstaufen. These interlocking crises of sovereignty and fiscality compromised Charles's dealings with his own backers as well. The post-Benevento period might have looked different if he had simply been able to pay Enrique of Castile what he owed him. By linking up with the Hohenstaufen and withholding the "tribute," al-Mustansir had shown Charles that he had to be taken seriously.⁷⁵

⁷³ Saba Malaspina, p. 183. ⁷⁴ *RCA*, vol. 2: p. 175, no. 692 (Lefevre, no. 29).

⁷⁵ Michael Lower, "Louis IX, Charles of Anjou, and the Tunis Crusade of 1270," in *Crusades: Medieval Worlds in Conflict*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, James L. Naus, and Vincent

While demonstrating his ability to destabilize Angevin rule, al-Mustansir had not overcommitted himself. Angevin officials were never sure how involved he was in the Sicilian revolt: Had he sent the expeditionary force to Sciacca? Was he coming in person? Was Federico of Castile a Hafsid agent, or was he acting on his own? Working through proxies and creating uncertainty about his intentions allowed al-Mustansir to present himself as a potential friend to Angevin Sicily after the insurgency failed. It also enabled Charles to accept Hafsid overtures without losing face. The reciprocal gestures of late summer 1269—the dispatch of the Hafsid embassy and Federico of Castile's unopposed flight from Sicily—laid the groundwork for rapprochement. For all the disruption caused by conquest and rebellion, the framework for an agreement remained in place. Charles wanted Tunisian gold, al-Mustansir wanted Sicilian wheat, and both wanted political stability and free-flowing commerce in the central Mediterranean.

In a vacuum, resolving these complementary interests might have been straightforward. The negotiations, however, would have to take place against the backdrop of a looming interreligious conflict. For two years, the battle for Syria had been on hold while the struggle for the central Mediterranean had played itself out. Louis had got nowhere when he tried to interest Charles in the Holy Land crusade at Viterbo in the spring of 1267; and rather than separate himself from the Christian Mediterranean and unite with Baybars's citadel of Islam, al-Mustansir had integrated Hafsid Tunisia into European networks to the point of collaborating with Bavarians, Tuscans, and Castilians on a military expedition. In the summer of 1269, however, just as Charles and al-Mustansir were turning from conflict to accommodation, the demands of holy war made themselves felt once again, with uncertain consequences for the future of interreligious collaboration between Tunis and Sicily.

3

The Diversion

Confronted by Mongols and Franks, Baybars had struck against the lesser of these threats by capturing the Frankish strongholds of Caesarea, Arsuf, and Safad in 1265–6. In response, Louis IX of France had begun to organize a crusade to save what remained of Frankish Syria. His attempts to enlist his brother Charles of Anjou for the cause and to use Sicily as a staging ground for departure foundered, however, when the Hohenstaufen and al-Mustansir of Tunis launched an insurgency that turned Sicily into a war zone and preoccupied Charles until the late summer of 1269. Up until that point, relations between the four major figures of the Tunis Crusade had followed a set pattern, with Charles's difficulties with al-Mustansir impeding Louis's desire for conflict with Baybars. When Sicily returned to Angevin control, the question was whether that dynamic would shift. It did, and with unexpected results. In 1269, there was a switch of pairings: Baybars and Charles exchanged several embassies, while al-Mustansir sent envoys to Louis. The Tunis Crusade was the unforeseen consequence of the realignment of interests that resulted from this diplomacy.

The reordering of relations among Capetians, Angevins, Mamluks, and Hafsids took place within an expansive diplomatic orbit. The web of alliances around the leading actors in the crusade extended from the British Isles to Inner Asia: England, Castile, Aragon, Venice, Pisa, Genoa, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Achaia, Epiros, Byzantium, the crusader states of Syria, and the Mongol khanates of the Golden Horde, Persia, and Transoxiana all played a part in the build-up to the crusade. These powers did not seem to acknowledge any geographical limits to the conflicts and collaborations in which they engaged. Carried only on horses and ships, Mongol, Byzantine, and Mamluk ambassadors traveled thousands of miles in months-long journeys to negotiate with monarchies as distant as Aragon, France, and England. The Tunis Crusade was not a world war, but it was pan-Eurasian. These broad horizons were a hallmark of the Mediterranean world after the Mongol invasions of western Asia and eastern Europe in the mid-thirteenth century. Prior to that time, Tunis had been peripheral to

medieval Middle Eastern conflicts. In this new environment of seemingly limitless possibilities for waging war and making peace, the Ifriqiyan port city took its unfortunate place on the frontline in the battle for far-away Syria.

THE BAYBARS EFFECT

An act of holy war—brutal and uncompromising—set off the diplomatic maneuverings that eventually diverted the crusade to Tunis. In the early winter of 1268, Baybars learned that the Mongols were planning a raid on Aleppo. He mustered his forces and set off for Gaza on February 16. The Mongol threat, however, was only a pretext for the advance, which he put about to fool the Franks into thinking that they were not the target of the new campaign. In fact, even before he left Cairo, Baybars had dispatched a courier to his military commander in Damascus with orders to mobilize his Mamluks and bring them to Banyas. There, another courier relayed orders to be ready to besiege Beaufort, a Frankish fortress overlooking Beirut and Sidon, but to take no action until the sultan arrived. Baybars then advanced up the coast from Gaza to Jaffa, which Louis IX had refortified in the early 1250s. On March 8, 1268, the sultan's soldiers surrounded the city, forced open the gates, and advanced on the citadel, which surrendered on the same day. Keeping to his policy of eliminating beachheads for future crusades, he had the citadel destroyed. With the loss of Jaffa, the Franks no longer held a major coastal stronghold south of Acre.¹

On April 4, 1268, Baybars arrived before Beaufort. His Syrian forces had already brought in wood and were building mangonels and other siege artillery. The castle had been modified over the years and now housed two citadels. Deciding it was impossible to defend them both, the garrison abandoned one to the besiegers and regrouped in the other. Baybars had the mangonels brought up and the bombardment began. Many Frankish noncombatants had not been able to escape before the surprise envelopment. Hoping to spare them, Frankish envoys asked Baybars for quarter on condition that he would allow the women and children to go free after the citadel surrendered to him. He agreed, and on April 15 he took possession of Beaufort and its soldiers, while an emir led off the rest

¹ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 133–6, vol. 2: pp. 105–8; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 291–4; Thorau, pp. 187–9.

toward Tyre. Along with Safad, taken two years before, Beaufort would form part of the system of Mamluk fortifications in the Syrian interior.²

From Beaufort, Baybars led his men on a hard march through the mountains of Lebanon toward Tripoli. They reached the city in early May 1268 and set about destroying crops, fields, and waterworks. The count of Tripoli was Bohemond VI, who was also prince of Antioch. Bohemond soon realized that the raids were only a diversion from the main target of the Mamluk drive north, which was the other city he ruled. In mid-May, the sultan brought his army to Hims, then to Hama, where it divided into three corps. The first made for St Simeon, Antioch's port, to block its access to the sea. The second circled around to the north, to prevent aid arriving from that direction. Baybars himself led the third corps straight to the city walls and had it invested on all sides.

On the approach to Antioch, a Mamluk advance guard encountered a Frankish patrol and in the skirmish that followed captured Simon Mansel, constable of the city. He offered to serve as a go-between, but three days of talks failed to produce results. He returned to the city to prepare for the inevitable assault. It began on May 19, 1268. Mamluk soldiers scaled the walls near Mt Silpius and entered the city. Resistance broke down, and one of the most famous massacres of the crusading era ensued. Baybars set guards at the gates and allowed his soldiers to kill and plunder at will. Ibn al-Furat suggested the scale of the slaughter, if not the exact numbers involved, when he wrote that 100,000 men lost their lives. Only the few Franks who found shelter in the citadel survived to fall into captivity the next day. Antioch itself—one of the great cities of the medieval eastern Mediterranean—would never recover from the destruction.³

Bohemond VI had been in Tripoli when the sack of Antioch took place. Baybars wrote to tell him what he had missed:

You could have seen your horsemen thrown down beneath the legs of horses, your houses in the power of the plunderers, with the spoilers roaming through them, your goods being weighed by the qintar, your ladies being sold in fours and being bought with a dinar of your own money. If you had seen your churches with their crosses broken and rent, the pages of the false Testaments scattered, the graves of the patriarchs rifled, your Muslim enemy trampling down the sanctuary; had you seen the altar on which had been sacrificed the monk, the priest and the deacon, with the patriarchs crushed by disaster and the children of your kingdom enslaved . . . had you seen these

² Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 137–42, vol. 2: pp. 108–12; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 295–9; Thorau, pp. 188–9.

³ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 143–60, vol. 2: 113–26; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 307–9; Thorau, pp. 190–2.

things, you would have said, 'Would that I were dust. Would that no message had come to give me news of these things.'⁴

While dwelling on Bohemond's failure to protect his people—the basic responsibility of any medieval ruler—the letter also stressed the religious character of the violence done to Antioch. The Egyptian and Syrian soldiers were not just agents of a regional rival; they were the “Muslim enemy.” They plundered horses, houses, and women, the usual targets of a sacking; but they also destroyed crosses in the churches (rather than keeping them as booty), ripped up the holy books, desecrated Christian graves, and killed clergy on the altars where they once celebrated the mysteries of their faith. With its rhetoric of interreligious confrontation, the letter was powerfully reductive. It transformed what was actually a multilateral struggle into a dichotomous conflict between two parties defined by allegiance to incompatible faiths. To Bohemond, that was the message Baybars wanted to deliver. The sultan would eliminate him, or die in the attempt. Coexistence was no longer possible.

Baybar's Near Eastern neighbors were quick to put his unwillingness to compromise to the test. They knew as well as he did that setting out an intransigent position was a perfect way to start a new round of negotiations. Baybars has gone down in history as a great conqueror; he was also the master of the punitive truce. The crusader states offered fruitful ground in this respect. By the late 1260s, they were hopelessly atomized, with competing authorities operating as semi-autonomous units within the greater whole. The military orders (Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights), the Italian maritime republics (Pisa, Genoa, and Venice), and even the lords of individual towns within the kingdom of Jerusalem (the count of Jaffa, the lady of Beirut) were all willing to negotiate with Baybars individually, thereby ceding him enormous leverage. In the spring of 1268, however, hope for a more unified response to the Mamluk threat emerged in the form of Hugh of Lusignan.

Hugh arrived in Acre in late April 1268, between Baybars's conquests of Beaufort and Antioch. He had been crowned king of Cyprus on December 23, 1267. In September 1268, he would become king of Jerusalem as well, uniting the two monarchies of the Latin East for the first time in generations. Anticipating this rare accomplishment, he had come to Acre to make peace with Baybars before the kingdom he hoped to rule disappeared entirely. After accepting an oath of loyalty from the commune of Acre, Hugh sent envoys to Baybars in Damascus. In return for a ten-year truce covering Cyprus and Acre's hinterland, the sultan

⁴ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 157–8, vol. 2: p. 124.

extracted significant territorial concessions: the mountain lands above Sidon (with the Franks retaining the lowlands), and revenue-sharing *condominia* in Haifa (Cayphas), Karmal (Carmel), Athlith (Chateau Pèlerin), and al-Qurayn (Montfort). In July, Baybars's representatives brought the agreement to Acre for Hugh to ratify. He proposed two modifications to the draft, asking for Cyprus to be excluded and for the option of setting aside the truce if a crusade arrived under the leadership of a king from overseas. Lacking the authority to sanction these changes, the Egyptian envoys went home empty-handed. Although Baybars had attached harsh conditions to the truce, it still offered the chance for extended peace with Egypt. Given what had just happened at Antioch, this was no small thing. Hugh, however, chose to keep the crusade option open instead. By rejecting the agreement, he would be free to welcome Louis on Cyprus (where the French king had halted in 1248) and to campaign by his side on the mainland. He was gambling his political future on the proposition that Louis's second crusade would be more successful than his first.⁵

THE SEARCH FOR ALLIES

If he had known how much progress Louis had made on his crusade planning by the summer of 1268, Hugh might have been more cautious. As with the Egyptian Crusade of 1248–52, the preparations were proving challenging. Louis needed soldiers, allies, money, and ships. Despite the qualms of Jean of Joinville and others, some French nobles began to take the cross from the late spring of 1267 onwards. The knightling of Louis's eldest son Philippe on June 5 was an important occasion for new commitments. Alphonse, count of Poitiers, Louis's brother, signed on for the crusade in spring 1267, as did his son-in-law, Thibaut, count of Champagne and king of Navarre.⁶

There were also encouraging developments for the crusade outside France. Recruitment for Louis's first crusade had been largely limited to his own domains on account of the papal-imperial conflict and his own territorial disputes with the Crown of Aragon and England. The fall of the Hohenstaufen and peace treaties with Jaume I of Aragon and Henry III of

⁵ Jesse Izzo, *The Frankish Nobility and the Fall of Acre: Diplomacy, Society, and War in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, c.1242–1291* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 2016), pp. 86–9; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 164, vol. 2: pp. 129–30.

⁶ Primat, pp. 39–40; *Layettes*, no. 5287 (Thibaut); *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1210 (Alphonse).

England cleared the way for a wider response. Despite his excommunication for adultery—or perhaps because of it—Jaume took the cross for the Holy Land in late 1266.⁷ He was 58 years old and had made his military reputation conquering Valencia and the Balearic islands from the Muslim powers of al-Andalus. Now he wanted to test himself in the Holy Land, the most prestigious crusade venue of them all. Louis's other peace partner, Henry III, did not believe that his domestic circumstances would allow him to go on crusade. England was just returning to a semblance of normalcy after Simon de Montfort's revolt of the mid-1260s. Henry's eldest son, the Lord Edward, saw the situation differently. He pressed his father and Pope Clement IV for permission to join the crusade. After initial hesitation they gave in and Edward took the cross on June 24, 1268.⁸

Louis had eased the way by promising to loan Edward money for his campaign. This unusual arrangement points to the financial burden the crusade placed on the French crown. Rather than funding their own retinues, even wealthy magnates were contracting with Louis to serve on the campaign. To make matters worse, the money he needed to pay them was proving hard to come by. While the Sicilian campaign had been underway, papal funding for the Holy Land expedition had been limited to a five-year hundredth on church revenues. In May 1267, Clement had tried to open the spigot. He granted the king income from vow redemptions and testamentary bequests in the kingdom of France; a three-year tenth of ecclesiastical income within the royal domains; and a three-year twentieth on church revenues in the neighboring provinces of Léon, Metz, Toul, and Verdun.⁹ The problem was that, after years of funding expeditions to the Holy Land, Latin Greece, and Sicily, the French churches were tired of paying for crusades. Louis's first crusade alone had cost them 950,000 *livres tournois*. No sooner had Clement announced the new taxes than complaints began to pour into the papal curia from ecclesiastical provinces across northern France.¹⁰

In the face of clerical resistance, Louis appealed to the pope and turned to expedients. Against precedent, he demanded that "daily distributions"—the

⁷ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1177.

⁸ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1288; Sternfeld, pp. 87–8; Simon Lloyd, "The Lord Edward's Crusade, 1270–2: Its Setting and Significance," in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Cambridge: Boydell Press, 1984), pp. 120–4.

⁹ *Layettes*, no. 5274; *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 466 (vow redemptions); *Layettes*, no. 5276; *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 463–4 (the tenth in the kingdom of France); *Layettes*, no. 5275; *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 465 (the twentieth in neighboring dioceses).

¹⁰ *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 595, 852, 1249.

charity that local churches dispensed to their wards and the poor—should also be subject to the tenth. Clement drew the line at this. He urged the king to drop a request that was likely to do long-term damage to his relations with the French church.¹¹

Exacerbating the pressure to pay for soldiers was the need for ships to sail them overseas. As of the late 1260s, there was no French Navy. There was a port—Aigues-Mortes, built for the Egyptian Crusade—but no royal ships docking there. Whatever vessels Louis required, he would have to hire or custom order. Given the lack of shipbuilding experience in the royal domains, this meant dealing with a foreign power; and since that foreign power would have its own security needs, political interests, and economic imperatives, the securing of transport for the army was bound to be a delicate proposition.

The Italian maritime republics usually supplied sea transport for Holy Land crusades. Although they were seldom on good terms, relations among Pisa, Genoa, and Venice were particularly poor in the late 1260s. The War of St Sabas, waged between Genoa and Venice in the crusader states since the late 1250s, had spread throughout the Mediterranean. Pisa's support for Conradin's Italian invasion was another sore point. Wary of each other, would any be willing to commit warships to an extended deployment overseas? Louis's own involvement in Italian politics did not help matters either. By allowing his brother to attempt the conquest of the *Regno*, he had committed himself to the Guelf cause. Pisa was unlikely to build him a fleet as a result. These powers also had commercial engagements to consider. All of them traded in Alexandria, a great Mediterranean entrepôt. How willing would they be to risk their futures there by joining the coalition Louis was building against Baybars?

In spring 1268, Louis began negotiating with Venice. Her envoys arrived in Paris and offered three large ships and seven smaller ones at a high price.¹² In the summer, negotiations continued in Venice, but the terms did not improve. By offering to transport Louis's army, Venice was hoping to win favor with Clement IV so that he would authorize a crusade against Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos of Byzantium, who had stripped Venice of the privileged commercial position it had occupied in the Bosphorus before he took power in 1261. In late July, a diplomatic breakthrough with Michael VIII opened up a more direct route back into the Black Sea. On June 30, the emperor sent ambassadors to Venice to seal

¹¹ *Registres de Clément IV*, nos. 627, 1374.

¹² Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, *Documenti inediti riguardanti le due crociate di San Ludovico IX, re di Francia* (Genoa, 1858), pp. 378–80.

a five-year truce.¹³ In mid-September, the Venetians pulled out of the discussions with Louis IX, citing concerns that Baybars would confiscate their goods in Alexandria if they agreed to build ships for the crusade.¹⁴

Louis now turned to Marseille, which offered transportation at the rate of 800 marks per 1,000 passengers.¹⁵ Louis booked a few ships from the city, but turned to Genoa for a better price. Like Venice, Genoa should also have wanted to avoid offending Baybars, since Genoese merchants profited from the slave trade between the Black Sea and Egypt. On this occasion, however, Genoa was prepared to play a double game, negotiating with Louis while hoping to retain its preponderance on the Black Sea–Alexandria route.

On October 10, 1268, Louis empowered Henri of Champrepus, a cleric, and Guillaume of Mora, the king's sergeant, to negotiate with the Genoese about leasing or constructing ships for his "overseas passage." Over the next several months, Henri and Guillaume would agree to multiple contracts with the commune and private consortiums of Genoese ship owners. In total, they acquired nineteen vessels, seven of which would be newly constructed.¹⁶

The contracts go into minute detail about building specifications, terms of payment, and the construction process. A sense of the cost and complexity of the process comes through in a contract of November 28 between Louis and the *podestà* of Genoa, Guido of Corrighia. The commune agreed to build two ships for Louis at a cost of 14,000 *l.t.*, provided that the Genoese could import the wood for the masts, lateen yards, and rudders from the royal forest of Angles. The logistical challenges involved in extracting the huge trunks required for the masts in particular, and hauling them from northern France to the Genoese yards, must have been enormous.¹⁷

While detailed in many respects, the contracts are vague in others. They never mentioned a destination for the expedition, beyond the generic "overseas." They also gave Louis flexibility over how he could deploy the

¹³ *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. Gottlieb Tafel and Georg Thomas, 3 vols (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1856–7), vol. 3: 92–100; Borghese, pp. 34–5; Sternfeld, p. 98.

¹⁴ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1412.

¹⁵ Mollat, p. 293; Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), p. 543.

¹⁶ For Louis's naval contracts with Genoa, see Augustin Jal, "Pacta navorum," in *Documents historiques inédits tirés des collections manuscrites de la bibliothèque royale et des archives ou des bibliothèques des départements*, ed. Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac (Paris: F. Didot, 1841), vol. 1: pp. 507–615; Belgrano, *Documenti inediti*; Sternfeld, pp. 363–8; Mollat, p. 293; and Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 543–4. The contracts are also easily consulted in *Layettes*.

¹⁷ *Layettes*, no. 5435.

fleet. He could sail it wherever he wanted and could halt for a time, even over the winter, and then resume the voyage the following spring. Under this scenario, a two-stage campaign was conceivable, with a stop at one location setting the stage for an assault on the Mamluks in Egypt or Syria. The ships were supposed to be ready at Aigues-Mortes by May 10, 1270.

Genoa had joined France, England, and the Crown of Aragon on the crusade. In the meantime, though, Louis lost an ally when Pope Clement IV passed away at the end of November 1268, ushering in a long vacancy in the Apostolic See. Clement's death had consequences for Charles as well, giving him more freedom to manage his foreign policy. Charles, in fact, remained non-committal about the new crusade. He thought Mamluk Egypt was too strong to confront on the battlefield and favored a diplomatic approach to saving the crusader states. His own interests as king of Sicily and count of Provence also encouraged him toward conciliation. Provençal and Sicilian traders were active in Alexandria and Charles did not want to jeopardize their access. Settling with Baybars would also leave Charles free to deal with the Sicilian revolt and continue securing the *Regno*. With the sultan neutralized, Charles could intervene against Michael VIII in Epiros and Achaia.

Charles sent envoys to Cairo in the early summer of 1268, after learning of the sack of Antioch. They asked Baybars to refrain from further attacks on the kingdom of Jerusalem and to give his friendship to Charles. They recalled the Hohenstaufen tradition of peaceful relations with Egypt and asserted that Charles sought the same close relations with Baybars that Emperor Frederick II had enjoyed with the Ayyubid sultans al-Malik al-Kamil and al-Salih Ayyub.

Baybars responded warmly to these overtures. In a letter to Charles, he accepted his offer of friendship and agreed to honor his intercession on behalf of the Syrian Franks. To this offer of peace on two fronts, the sultan attached a thinly veiled threat: he reminded Charles of "the services that he had already done" for him and his brother during their Egyptian campaign. This allusion to Charles's humiliation in the delta served as a warning against the folly of trying another attack. Joining his brother's latest venture against Egypt, Baybars insinuated, would again lead to disaster.¹⁸

The sultan entrusted the letter to a high-level diplomatic delegation, which included the *hajib* Badr al-Din Muhammad b. 'Aziz. The stakes were high. If Badr al-Din could secure an agreement with Charles, Baybars would remove a powerful member from the coalition that was forming against him. Better still, Charles might be able to deflect Louis away from

¹⁸ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 166, vol. 2: p. 131.

the Levant. Rather than proceeding directly to Brindisi, the envoys sailed to Genoa. They arrived there just as Louis's representatives were finalizing the naval contracts. Before meeting with Charles, Badr al-Din was going to find out how advanced Louis's preparations for the crusade were and what role the Genoese planned to play in it.

Badr al-Din's visit to Genoa did prove illuminating. As he was walking with his delegation through Genoa's main piazza one day, he encountered a group of Mongols. Seemingly intent on recreating the battle of 'Ayn Jalut in miniature, the two parties began to fight it out in broad daylight. Eventually, their Genoese escorts managed to separate them before real harm could be done.¹⁹ The Mongols were in Genoa on an embassy from the Ilkhan Abaqa, who had succeeded his father Hülegü in February 1265. This was an alarming development from Badr al-Din's point of view. Because of a shared interest in Black Sea trade, the Genoese usually maintained good relations with the Mongols of the Golden Horde. The presence of the Ilkhan's men in Genoa—archrivals to the Golden Horde and the Mamluks alike—suggested that the Genoese might be switching sides. Equally disturbing for Badr al-Din was the appearance of a Byzantine embassy in the city. Ambassadors from Michael VIII were accompanying the Mongols on their mission but had missed the fistfight on the piazza. They had stopped in Genoa en route to meet Louis IX in Paris. If it had not dawned on him already, Badr al-Din could now guess that the Genoese, the Byzantines, and the Ilkanate had joined the anti-Mamluk coalition.

The links between the eastern and western wings of the crusade alliance had been growing for some time before the Mamluks figured out what was going on in the streets of Genoa. In early 1267, not long after Baybars's conquest of Safad, Abaqa had dispatched envoys to Clement IV and Jaume I of Aragon. To Clement's surprise, they brought him a letter written in Mongolian—the Ilkhan's Latin secretary was absent when the mission was launched. Despite the language barrier, the envoys conveyed Abaqa's enthusiasm for supporting a crusade against Baybars. Judging by his reply, Clement also came away from his meetings with them convinced that Abaqa had converted to Latin Christianity.²⁰ This was not the case, but intimating an interior disposition to embrace the faith was a common

¹⁹ *Cronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 30: p. 405.

²⁰ *Registres de Clément IV*, no. 1244; Karl-Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels*, *Studien und Texte*, 291 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1981), no. 42; Jean Richard, "La croisade de 1270, premier 'passage général'?" *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 133 (1989): pp. 519–20.

feature of Mongol diplomacy with European powers in this era.²¹ From the papal curia, the Mongol mission went to Perpignan for discussions with Jaume of Aragon in early spring 1267. These did not progress far, but Jaume was intrigued enough to appoint an ambassador, Jaume Alaric of Perpignan, to accompany the Mongol envoys on their return trip to Abaqa.²²

It was in the course of Jaume Alaric's embassy to the Ilkhan that Baybars conquered Antioch, which increased the interest of both parties in mounting a joint response. Prince Bohemond had been a client of the Ilkhan since 1260 and a Mongol official had been in Antioch when the Mamluks sacked it.²³ In late spring 1268, Jaume and two Mongol envoys made the long trek back across the Mediterranean. Joining them were representatives of Michael VIII, whose illegitimate daughter Maria had married Abaqa in 1265.²⁴ The Byzantine presence in the legation would boost Abaqa's Christian bona fides, which would help in negotiations with Jaume of Aragon, Clement IV, and Louis IX, all of whom were on the itinerary. The Byzantines had their own agenda as well. Whereas Abaqa was a natural fit for the anti-Mamluk coalition, Michael VIII was not. Like Baybars, Michael had been the target of papal crusade preaching, and he shared the sultan's interest in keeping commercial traffic flowing between Alexandria and the Bosphorus. But Charles of Anjou's conquest of Sicily and aggressive stance toward Epiros and Achaia changed the calculus for Michael. He would be willing to support the Holy Land crusade if Charles could be kept out of the Greek East. To entice them further, Michael dangled church union with Rome. In his way, he was proposing a conversion as drastic as the one Abaqa was presumed to have undergone. For the past sixty years, the papacy had preached crusades against Orthodox Greek rulers on the basis that they were schismatics who had willfully separated from Latin Christianity. A papal–Capetian alliance with Michael promised to heal the schism and strengthen the forces arrayed against Christendom's greatest enemy.

By the winter of 1268–9, the joint Ilkhanid–Byzantine embassy had reached Genoa, where the unpleasant meeting with the Mamluk envoys took place. From there, the dueling legations went their separate ways: the Mongols and the Byzantines to Clement IV in Viterbo, Louis IX in Paris,

²¹ Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), pp. 173–4.

²² *Llibre dels fets del rei en Jaume*, ed. Jordi Bruguera, 2 vols (Barcelona: Editorial Barcino, 1991), vol. 2: p. 339; *The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon*, trans. Damian Smith and Helena Buffery (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), p. 334.

²³ Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 167.

²⁴ Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 423.

and Jaume of Aragon in Valencia; the Mamluks to Charles of Anjou in his siege camp outside Lucera.²⁵

As the Mongol–Byzantine mission made the rounds, various proposals for collaboration were raised. In a letter to the pope, this time composed in Latin, the Ilkhan promised to dispatch soldiers under his brother Ejei to help the crusaders.²⁶ In their negotiations with Jaume of Aragon, the Mongol envoys were more specific. Jaume would later recall in his memoir that they suggested a rendezvous in Ayas, a port town in Cilician Armenia.²⁷ The meeting point was advantageous in several respects. The king of Lesser Armenia, Hethum I (1227–70), had been a tributary of the Ilkhanate for decades and shared its anti-Mamluk inclinations. For a time, Hethum had been unable to confront the Mamluks because they had captured his son and heir Leo in battle and held him as their prisoner in Cairo. In the spring of 1268, however, Hethum secured Leo's release from Baybars.²⁸ With his diplomatic flexibility restored, Hethum could offer to host the crusaders at Ayas. Accessible to the crusader fleet, the town offered a location well to the north of Mamluk holdings, which would allow the expedition to resupply and rearm in safety. Because it was also close to Ilkhanid territory, Ayas would be easy for Abaqa's forces to reach. Through his envoys, Abaqa promised to provide Jaume's army with food and siege engines, which were too bulky to bring over from Iberia economically. Byzantine ships could comfortably reach the port as well: Michael VIII offered to send supplies by sea. By the spring of 1269, Abaqa's diplomacy had produced a crusade plan: after meeting up in Armenia, a Mongol–Aragonese–Armenian expeditionary force would mount a campaign against Baybars. Many details were left unresolved, but it was enough of an outline to take to Paris, where the joint Ilkhanate–Byzantine embassy would meet with Louis IX.

While the embassy made its way north, Charles of Anjou waited for Baybars's ambassadors to arrive in the *Regno*. The brawl in the piazza was not the only problem they had encountered on the way. Charles had sent sailors from Marseille to bring the envoys down to Naples, but the escorts had failed to appear. On February 16, 1269, Charles wrote to his friends in Genoa, the Grimaldi brothers, asking them to make sure that the Mamluk emissaries were being well looked after and to arrange for their transportation. He wanted the brothers to explain to the envoys that

²⁵ *Annali Genovesi*, vol. 4: p. 115; *Cronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna*, p. 405.

²⁶ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, no. 43.

²⁷ *Libre dels fets*, vol. 2: p. 342 (*Book of Deeds*, pp. 337–8).

²⁸ Thorau, pp. 60, 192–3.

nothing was closer to his heart than their good treatment and that he had thrown the men from Marseille in jail for their incompetence.²⁹

Charles's eagerness to negotiate with the Mamluks is understandable. Although revolts against him in Lucera and Sicily were ongoing, in other respects his negotiating position had improved since he had sent his embassy to Cairo in the early summer of 1268. Conradin was dead and Enrique of Castile was imprisoned in an Angevin jail. The situation had stabilized somewhat in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Hugh of Lusignan had been crowned king in fall 1268 and was enjoying a (brief) honeymoon period with the barons of the realm. Moreover, Badr al-Din was now aware of the alliance that was forming against his master. Charles could use the threat of the crusade to his advantage. Under these circumstances, it made sense for the Mamluk delegation to drag out negotiations rather than commit to an unfavorable agreement. The longer they talked, the longer Charles might delay joining his brother's crusade. While a treaty signed on the spot might have been ideal for Charles, keeping Baybars engaged diplomatically, rather than on the battlefield, was a decent alternative. In the end, both parties were probably not too disappointed with the outcome of this round of negotiations: Charles would send a delegation back to Cairo in the company of Badr al-Din and his retinue.

Minutely planned, and assembled over two months, Charles put together a delegation meant to dazzle. There would be no punitive treaty for this group. Charles appointed as its leader Guillaume of Farumville, deacon of Saint-Pierre d'Orleans. Guillaume would sail with a traveling party of forty-six, including two military advisors, two Dominican friars, and two senior Angevin officials. The overall expense was impressive: 50 ounces of gold for new robes for the dignitaries; 6 for weapons on the boats; 101 for the wages of the sailors and the helmsmen; 79 for the expenses of Guillaume's retinue and that of Badr al-Din, which numbered 22 all on its own.³⁰ Shortly after June 21, 1269, Guillaume set sail from Brindisi on the *Portafore*, laden with supplies, weapons, many diplomats, and a thoughtful Italian gift for the sultan: hundreds of cheeses.³¹

THE FIRST STRIKE

While the search for allies continued, Jaume of Aragon was growing impatient with diplomacy. Although Charles's ambassadors had just arrived in Cairo, and Abaqa and Michael VIII's in Paris, Jaume decided

²⁹ RCA, vol. 2: p. 19, no. 56 (Lefevre, no. 10).

³⁰ RCA, vol. 5: pp. 207–8 (Lefevre, no. 21).

³¹ RCA, vol. 2: p. 69, no. 247 (Lefevre, no. 14).

it was time to go. He liked Abaqa's plan, and wanted to be the first European king to collaborate with the Mongols on a crusade. The alliance also made sense in terms of Catalan-Angevin rivalry. While Charles was pushing for peace with Baybars, Jaume was joining the alliance to fight him. Jaume was not put off by the opinion of his brother-in-law, King Alfonso X of Castile, who told him that the Mongols were a deceitful people and that he would be better off staying home. For Jaume, the unlikely, bordering on the miraculous, appearance of Mongol envoys from thousands of miles away was a sign that God approved of the venture. King Alfonso wished him luck and sent him 100,000 gold *morabetins* and a hundred horses for the expedition.³²

Contributions to the campaign poured in from other sources as well. The cities of Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia offered generous financial support, with Barcelona chipping in 80,000 *sous*, and Morella 10,000. Majorca gave Jaume 50,000, which he spent on three ships and beef for the army. By late August 1269, a sizable force had gathered in Barcelona: about 800 knights, a few thousand footsoldiers, a large number of war-horses, and several churchmen, including Bishop Arnau of Barcelona. As befitted a major maritime power, the fleet assembled to carry them east was impressive: some thirty large ships, more than twenty galleys, and many smaller vessels.³³

On September 4, 1269, the ships set sail. Jaume's vessel made good progress at first, but on the evening of September 6 a storm rolled in from the east, kicking up heavy squalls and turning the waters dark. The captain, Ramon Marquet, struck the sails to ride out the storm. For five days, they were battered in the Gulf of Lion. Sailors who had made the passage overseas dozens of times swore that they had never seen anything like it. Jaume summoned Ramon and told him that since God had not given them a wind to sail east, it appeared that the voyage did not please Him and should be abandoned. Once the king had interpreted the divine will in this fashion, his counselors pleaded with him to return home. Because of the delay, even if they could make the crossing they would run into the thick fog that (apparently!) enveloped Acre in early winter. On about September 16, Jaume's ship approached Aigues-Mortes, the French port from which Louis planned to launch his expedition the following spring. But another strong wind blew the crusaders toward Agde, where

³² *Llibre dels fets*, vol. 2: pp. 339–41 (*Book of Deeds*, pp. 334–5, 337).

³³ *Llibre dels fets*, vol. 2: pp. 342–3 (*Book of Deeds*, p. 338); Reinhold Röhrich, "Der Kreuzzug des Königs Jacob I. von Aragonien (1269)," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 11 (1890): pp. 374–5.

they were able to put in on the 17th. Jaume's crusade was over, thirteen days after it had begun.³⁴

After recovering for a while in Montpellier, and refusing several offers to resume the expedition, Jaume returned by land to Catalonia in October 1269. Some ships, however, made it through the storm and carried on toward the Levant. Under the leadership of Jaume's illegitimate sons, Ferran and Pere, 400 knights risked the fog and landed at Acre at the end of October. At about this time, rumors reached Baybars in Cairo that the Mongols were on the move in northern Syria, raiding Bedouin flocks around al-Sajur, not far from Aleppo. Although a rendezvous with the Mongols in Lesser Armenia was clearly no longer part of the plan, the Mongols and the Catalan-Aragonese crusaders seemed ready to strike together at Baybars's Syrian domains.

Leaving Cairo in late November, Baybars reached Damascus in early December. The Mongols withdrew on news of his arrival. Abaqa was unable to invade northern Syria because the Chaghadayid khan Baraq had attacked the Ilkhanate strongholds of Merv and Nishapur in Transoxiana.³⁵ Many of the crusaders had gone home by then as well, once they realized that King Jaume was not coming. Having heard that the sultan had brought only a small force from Egypt, the new commander of the French regiment in Acre, Robert of Cresèques, along with Olivier of Termes, an experienced Capetian soldier, led out a raiding party into the area around Montfort. The Aragonese crusaders remained behind in their camp outside Acre. Hoping to take advantage of Robert's inexperience, Baybars assembled troops from Safad and ordered them to attack the Frankish raiders and then retreat southwards while he brought his own men and several Syrian emirs across Vadum Jacob into the vicinity of Toron Saladini. At the first contact with the soldiers from Safad, on December 19, 1269, Olivier of Termes pressed for a retreat to Acre, but Robert was eager to prove his worth in his new position. He pursued the Safad contingent into the vanguard of Baybars's ambush. Robert had been killed, and his fellow Franks defeated, before the sultan could even arrive on the battlefield. The Catalan-Aragonese crusaders went home the following spring, about the same time that Louis IX was setting out for Aigues-Mortes. The first concerted response to Baybars's Syrian conquests had failed.³⁶

³⁴ *Llibre dels fets*, vol. 2: 343–6 (*Book of Deeds*, pp. 338–42).

³⁵ Richard, "La croisade de 1270," p. 521; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 179; Bertold Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung, und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350*, 4th ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 62–3.

³⁶ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 172–5, vol. 2: pp. 136–8; Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 361–5; *Templare di Tiro*, pp. 112–16 (Crawford, pp. 53–5); Thorau, pp. 199–201; Röhrich, "Der Kreuzzug des Jacob I.," pp. 378–81.

TUNISIAN ENVOYS WITNESS A BAPTISM

While Jaume of Aragon was recovering in Agde from his passage across the Gulf of Lion, his cook came to him with a story. A boat moored next to them in the harbor had two passengers on board who had just arrived from Tunis. One was Francis Cendra, who was the prior of St Catherine's, a prominent Dominican house in Barcelona with close links to the royal family. The other was Ramon Martí, a Dominican friar fluent in Hebrew and Arabic whom Jaume had appointed to censor Jewish religious literature in 1264. When the friars asked the cook about his ship, he told them it belonged to the king, who had returned from his crusade because of bad weather. The friar's response to this information was not what the cook expected. Rather than stopping in for a visit, they continued on their way to Montpellier. Jaume knew both men well and was a little put out by their failure to pay a courtesy call.³⁷

After the friars stopped in Montpellier, it is likely that they traveled north, to Paris. It is otherwise hard to understand why they would have sailed directly from Tunis to Agde, a port on the French Mediterranean, rather than home to Barcelona. Moreover, both men had personal connections to Louis IX and shared his interests in crusading and missionary work. It is also true that Louis needed the expertise they could provide at that time. In October 1269, about three weeks after the friars met Jaume's cook in Agde, the French king hosted Tunisian envoys in Paris. Having just come from there, Ramon and Francis could offer their own account of the situation in the city, which could help Louis to contextualize his conversations with the emissaries. In addition, Ramon's knowledge of Arabic would enable him to serve as a translator. Monarchs based in the Mediterranean could use Jews, renegades, and bilingual mercenaries as translators, but Louis either could not (in the case of mercenaries) or would not (Jews and renegades) employ these familiar sources of multilingual expertise. He preferred Dominicans who knew Arabic and there were very few of these around.³⁸

The Tunisian envoys were in Paris as part of a broader Hafsids diplomatic outreach to Angevin Sicily and Capetian France. The timing of the embassies and the interconnected issues they raised suggest that the same envoys carried out both missions, arriving first in Sicily in late August

³⁷ *Llibre dels fets*, vol. 2: p. 346 (*Book of Deeds*, p. 342).

³⁸ Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 230.

1269, meeting with Charles in September, and then making their way to Paris for negotiations with Louis in October. Because of the issues in play, the envoys would have wanted to hear what Charles had to say before talking to Louis.³⁹

Charles was concerned about security and money. He needed to stabilize Sicily and protect its southern frontier. By the time talks with the Hafsids got underway in September 1269, the Sicilian revolt was losing momentum but was not completely suppressed. While Federico of Castile had returned to Tunis, Conrad Capece was still on the loose. The revolt made clear that al-Mustansir could destabilize core Angevin holdings if he wished. Charles's plans for expansion elsewhere, particularly in the Greek East, hinged on achieving a *modus vivendi* with the emir. The tribute that Charles believed Tunis owed to the kingdom of Sicily was also critical. As Charles consolidated his rule, he claimed Hohenstaufen rights to lands and revenues wherever he could. For him, the tribute was part of what he had won at Benevento and Tagliacozzo. Underpinning this attitude were his dire financial circumstances following the conquest.

For al-Mustansir, the questions were whether, and how much, he would have to pay for peace with Charles and access to Sicilian wheat. He did not enjoy the leverage with Charles that he once had. The failure of the Sicilian uprising to restore the Hohenstaufen placed pressure on him to reach an accommodation with the new master of the *Regno*. So too did a return to the food shortages experienced in the late 1230s under Abu Zakariya. Ibn Khaldun talks about famine gripping Tunis in 1269 and 1270.⁴⁰ To alleviate the crisis, al-Mustansir needed Sicilian wheat more than ever. Finally, Charles could back up his demands with the threat of his brother's crusade. While news of Louis's expedition was widespread, no one knew where it was going. In the discussions with al-Mustansir's ambassadors, Charles could exploit the mystery to his advantage.

Given the importance of the issues at stake, they were never likely to be resolved in one round of negotiations. Whatever financial demands Charles may have made, the Tunisian envoys did not give in to them. Consequently, they left Apulia without a deal, and the danger of Charles ordering a retaliatory strike against Tunis remained real.

By early October 1269, the Tunisian envoys were with Louis IX in Paris. This was not the first time that al-Mustansir and Louis had been in contact. Geoffrey of Beaulieu, the king's Dominican confessor, reports

³⁹ I follow Sternfeld's (pp. 179–83) argument here.

⁴⁰ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 665 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 360–1).

that the two had exchanged several embassies before Louis departed on crusade.⁴¹ From Ibn Khaldun and al-Yunini, we can glean that these previous exchanges, like those between the emir and Charles, touched on issues of trade, debt, and money.⁴² Subjects of the French crown were becoming more involved in Mediterranean commerce as the monarchy expanded its presence in southern France, a transition symbolized by the construction of Aigues-Mortes for Louis's first crusade. In the absence of a formal treaty between Capetian France and Hafsid Ifriqiya, personal diplomacy may have been required to regulate the disputes that would arise as the first French merchants began to work in Tunis. There may have been a political dimension to the talks as well, since Louis had supported the overthrow of al-Mustansir's Hohenstaufen allies.

On October 9, 1269, the king gathered along with many nobles and churchmen at Saint-Denis to celebrate the feast day of France's patron saint. Geoffrey of Beaulieu says that the king decided to mark the occasion with the baptism of a "certain famous Jew." Louis was helping to lift the convert from the baptismal font when he called for the Tunisian envoys to participate in the ceremony:

Summoning them, with great emotion the king said, "Tell your lord the king on my behalf, that I long so earnestly for the salvation of his soul that I would choose to spend all my life in a Saracen dungeon and never see the clear light of the sun, if only your king and his people would become Christian in good faith!"⁴³

With Louis's speech to the envoys, we arrive at a central mystery of the Tunis Crusade: how did conversion become part of the diplomatic preliminaries to the campaign? Geoffrey is vague about who gave Louis the idea that al-Mustansir might be open to accepting Christianity, saying only that "trustworthy men" led him to believe it was possible.⁴⁴ Geoffrey certainly trusted his fellow Dominicans and there were many friars close to the king who could have advised him along these lines, including Ramon Martí and Francis Cendra, who had just left Tunis and may have been with Louis in Paris. Another possibility is the Tunisian envoys themselves. Having failed to reach a settlement with Charles of Anjou, they could have

⁴¹ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 116–17). Given the chronology, this is more likely to refer to the period before March 1270, when Louis "took up the cross" to set out on crusade, rather than prior to March 1267, when he formally announced his intent to launch an expedition.

⁴² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 655–6 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 350–2); al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 454.

⁴³ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 117).

⁴⁴ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 117).

floated the prospect of the emir's conversion to win Louis's sympathy and persuade him to intervene with his brother to bring peace to the central Mediterranean.

Could a man who had once claimed the caliphate have ever made such a proposal, however appealing the consequences? The short answer: yes, he certainly could have, although that does not necessarily mean that he did. Everything we know about the diplomatic environment in which al-Mustansir operated suggests that an offer to convert would have been a sensible, almost predictable element of negotiating with a monarch famously enthusiastic about Christianization. Three months earlier, in July 1269, Louis had hosted the ambassadors from the Mongol Ilkhan Abaqa. Their message to the papacy, Jaume of Aragon, and Louis was consistent: Abaqa had become a Latin Christian and would be a reliable partner in the war against Baybars. Louis would have heard a similar story from the Byzantine envoys traveling with the Mongols: Michael VIII would bring his people into Roman obedience and support the crusade if Louis could keep Charles from invading the Greek East. Christianization—or rather the promise of it—was a binding agent for the anti-Mamluk coalition. The suggestion that al-Mustansir harbored a secret enthusiasm for Christianity and so should not be set upon by the Angevins fits neatly into this context.⁴⁵

Whatever its source, the hint that the emir was ready to convert opened up new strategic possibilities for the crusade. Al-Mustansir would need support to take the plunge. He would fear for his honor, his throne, and his life if he abandoned Islam. But if Louis's army made a show of force before Tunis, he could accept the Christian faith with less fear of reprisals. The same pressure might also compel his people to convert, which would allow him to remain in power.⁴⁶ In the naval contracts with Genoa, Louis had allowed for the possibility of a two-stage expedition. A halt in Tunis might gain an improbable but spectacular addition to the anti-Mamluk coalition. With the emir on board, a new front in the war against Baybars could be opened up on his western flank. Even if al-Mustansir got cold feet, the crusaders could sack the city and use the plunder to fund the next stage of the campaign. Beyond these immediate benefits, a Christian presence in Tunis could spark a broader revitalization of the faith in North Africa, which had been a bulwark of the late antique church. In geo-political terms, it would hand control over ports on either side of the Sicilian Straits—the choke point of the Mediterranean—to the Capetians and their clients.

⁴⁵ *Cronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna*, p. 405; *Annali Genovesi*, p. 115; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 175–8.

⁴⁶ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 117).

By fall 1269, the coalitions assembled by Baybars and Louis to wage the battle for Syria were fraying at the edges. Baybars had already seen off Jaume of Aragon's premature attack. The Ilkhanate had failed to link up with the crusaders from the west. Al-Mustansir and Charles remained unreliable elements in the Mediterranean diplomatic nexus, because they had feet in both camps. Their fear of each other had sparked a diplomatic realignment that was drawing their new negotiating partners away from the struggle for which they had been preparing for so long. Thanks to his negotiations with al-Mustansir, Louis might come in peace to Tunis before confronting Egypt; and thanks to his negotiations with Charles, Baybars might grant a truce to the crusader states instead of destroying them.

FROM SYRACUSE TO CAGLIARI

Despite these tensions, Louis's original vision for the crusade remained in place. He would lead a large and united European force against Baybars, supported by the sultan's regional rivals. Collaborating with Charles remained central to the plan. On July 23, 1269, as the Sicilian revolt began to die down, Charles finally announced that he was ready to support the crusade:

Since King Louis, with one brother, his sons, barons, and a most powerful Christian army, has arranged to come to the port of Syracuse on the next feast of St. John [June 24, 1270], God willing setting out from that place in aid of the Holy Land, we intend to honor and swear in this magnificent passage for God.⁴⁷

Syracuse, on the east coast of Sicily, was an excellent staging ground for an expedition to Egypt or Syria. Charles promised to meet his brother there and have supplies waiting for the crusade army. He ordered all ship captains wanting to sail out of Apulian ports to return by April 1270 so they could be available to transport food and arms from the mainland. He made no commitment to sail east with the crusade; instead, he would provide the departure base and logistical support.

In late November, Louis sent a master carpenter, Honoratus, to the *Regno* to build siege engines and war machines. Charles placed all the wood he needed at his disposal. Assembling the machines in Sicily rather than France would save the cost and trouble of shipping them from

⁴⁷ Lefevre, no. 27.

Aigues-Mortes to Syracuse. The construction process was involved. Master Honoratus was still at it in late February 1270, when he asked for ropes and other materials from Charles, along with a *barque* to ship more wood from Manfredonia.⁴⁸

Charles provided everything the carpenter asked for and more. He even began to pay back some of the money Louis had lent him for the conquest of Sicily. On January 28, 1270, Charles surrendered the county of Anjou to Louis to repay a 5,000 *l.t.* loan. On the 31st, Charles allowed money that the countess of Flanders owed him to be transferred to Louis in repayment of other debts.⁴⁹

While cooperating with his older brother, Charles helped the Frankish regimes that the crusade was meant to rescue. Over the winter and early spring of 1270, he authorized shipments of wheat from the kingdom of Sicily to the Holy Land. In January, he allowed the Templar knight Hugh Bertrand to export 500 packloads (*salme*) of wheat from Bari and Brindisi, which was to be shared out among the Templars, Hospitallers, and Teutonic knights of Acre.⁵⁰ In February, he gave the master of the Hospitallers an outright gift: 300 packloads of wheat, 200 of barley, and sixteen horses and mules.⁵¹ More aid would flow to “the faithful of Acre” in April, with the proviso that it should not benefit “Greeks, Saracens, Pisans[!], or any other enemies of the Christian faithful.”⁵² For Charles, there were multiple benefits to this “wheat diplomacy.” The Franks of Syria were experiencing food shortages as a result of Baybars’s campaigns, which had destroyed crops and deprived them of productive agricultural land. Alleviating the shortfall helped Charles to bolster his image as a crusade enthusiast and papal “athlete of Christ.” It also built his influence in the region. He may already have been laying the groundwork for the step he would take in 1277, when he bought Maria of Antioch’s claim to the throne of Jerusalem. Just as in the Maghreb, Sicilian wheat was allowing Charles to flex his diplomatic muscles.

Even as he armed his brother’s crusade and fed the Franks of Syria, Charles remained deep in negotiations with Baybars. In winter 1269–70, the embassy he had sent to Cairo the previous spring returned to the *Regno*. The Dominican Brother Berenger landed at Brindisi with a new Mamluk

⁴⁸ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 180, no. 137 (Lefevre, no. 40); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 116, no. 75 (Lefevre, no. 42); *RCA*, vol. 3, p. 105, no. 78 (Lefevre, no. 59); *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 189, no. 476 (Lefevre, no. 60); *RCA*, vol. 3: pp. 106–7, nos. 83–4 (Lefevre, no. 61).

⁴⁹ *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 219, no. 634 (Lefevre, no. 49); Sternfeld, p. 330 (appendix A, no. 16); *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 244, no. 741 (Lefevre, no. 50).

⁵⁰ Philip B. Baldwin, *Pope Gregory X and the Crusades* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), p. 110.

⁵¹ Baldwin, *Gregory X*, pp. 110–11.

⁵² *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 27, no. 124.

delegation in tow.⁵³ The apparent double game that Charles was playing—appearing to support the crusade while conciliating its target—was less a betrayal of Louis than a disagreement with him over how to save Frankish Syria. As Charles worked for a diplomatic solution, he was happy to contribute to the military build-up and provide for the crusader states, because these measures increased both his negotiating leverage with Egypt and the chances of military success if discussions failed to produce an accord.

If Charles could negotiate a binding peace with Baybars, which the arrival of a crusade from Europe could not abrogate, he might not have to leave the kingdom of Sicily to go on crusade. This would allow him to deal with what he perceived to be the growing threat that Michael VIII posed to the Adriatic and Ionian buffer zone between Byzantium and the *Regno*. On September 7, 1269, Charles reached out to Venice, a potential partner in the region. He dispatched an envoy to propose an alliance to “make live war in good faith against the schismatic Palaiologos.” Charles promised to aid the Venetians and the deposed Latin Emperor Baudouin II to recover their rights within the Byzantine empire, including the “fourth part and a half” that Venice had once claimed.⁵⁴ There were two advantages to joining forces with the Venetians in this way. First, it would deprive Michael VIII of an ally, since he had agreed a peace treaty with them the year before. Second, it would bring their maritime power to bear on Charles’s behalf. Although the new doge, Lorenzo Tiepolo, was friendly to Charles and eager to regain Venetian preeminence in Byzantine territory, he rejected this overture. The Black Sea market in wheat that the treaty with Michael VIII had opened up was too lucrative to spurn.⁵⁵

Without Venetian ships, Charles would have to fall back on his own naval resources to protect his eastern frontier. These had suffered losses in a defeat to a Pisan squadron in the later stages of the Sicilian insurgency.⁵⁶ In November, Charles ordered Angevin arsenals along the Apulian and Sicilian coasts to repair all royal vessels “so they could be ready to take to the sea at an opportune moment.” In addition, Angevin officials were to take an inventory of private ships and forbid departures from the *Regno* without royal license, so that these could be leased if required. Finally, Charles had 1,000 packloads of wheat shipped from Marseille to Sicily so that it could be made into ship’s biscuit for the sailors.⁵⁷

⁵³ *RCA*, vol. 3, p. 182, no. 442 (Lefevre, no. 45).

⁵⁴ *RCA*, vol. 7: pp. 268–9, no. 2. ⁵⁵ Borghese, pp. 33–6.

⁵⁶ *Annali Genovesi*, p. 112; Bartolomeus di Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, ed. Giuseppe Paladino, in *RIS*, vol. 13, part 3, p. 7; Borghese, p. 20.

⁵⁷ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 152, no. 226 (Lefevre, no. 36); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 116–18, no. 76 (Lefevre, no. 38); *RCA*, vol. 3: pp. 60–1, no. 371 (Lefevre, no. 39).

Charles was scrambling to prepare a squadron that would be ready when Prince Guillaume of Achaia's one-year truce with Michael VIII expired at the end of 1269. After Guillaume had fought for Charles at Tagliacozzo against Conradin, it was time to return the favor. It soon became clear, though, that the fleet would not be ready in time. More orders for urgent repairs went out in early February 1270, accompanied by assurances that the money to pay for them would follow. Charles assigned his trusted fixer Anselm of Toucy to oversee the project.⁵⁸ To maximize available force, Charles imposed a remarkable system of control on the kingdom of Sicily. His officials sought to monitor and restrict all maritime traffic in and out of its ports, along with all trade in wheat and other foodstuffs.⁵⁹ But these measures were still not enough to get this expedition off the mark. In late March, Charles issued another round of instructions, this time to the protonotaries of Barletta and Monopoli (both on the Apulian coast opposite Epiros) to arm ten galleys and other vessels "quickly" so that they could put to sea before Easter. On March 31, 1270, the first Achaian expedition finally set sail.⁶⁰

While stiffening Achaian defenses against Michael VIII, Charles also tried to isolate him diplomatically by forming alliances with rulers surrounding Byzantium. In September 1269, Charles began negotiating with King Béla IV of Hungary. When the Latin empire had still existed, the papacy had regarded Hungarian support as critical to its survival. As the long-time ruler of a Latin Christian state that lay within striking distance of Constantinople, Béla had been on the receiving end of papal appeals to take up arms against the "schismatic" Greeks since the 1230s. Now that the empire was gone, Charles thought that Béla might still have a role to play as a regional counterweight to Michael VIII. After refusing Charles's own offer of marriage to his youngest daughter, Béla agreed to a double marriage—between the two children of his eldest son Prince István, László and Maria, and Charles's daughter Isabelle and son and heir Charles. Agreements with other local powers soon followed, including treaties with the tsar of Bulgaria and the king of Serbia.⁶¹ Although Charles's Adriatic policy remained defensive, Michael VIII did not see it that way. The

⁵⁸ *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 250, no. 770 (Lefevre, no. 53); *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 113, nos. 108–14 (Lefevre, no. 54); *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 251, no. 776 (Lefevre, no. 56).

⁵⁹ Borghese, pp. 26–7.

⁶⁰ *RCA*, vol. 3: pp. 145–6, nos. 233–4 (Lefevre, no. 71); *RCA*, vol. 3: pp. 98–9, no. 47, p. 148, no. 245, p. 275, no. 893.

⁶¹ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 7, no. 17, p. 14, no. 80, pp. 24–5, no. 114, p. 54, no. 237, p. 75, no. 322; Longnon, p. 190; Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282: A Study in Byzantine–Latin Relations* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1959; repr. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), pp. 216–17.

emperor was convinced that a full-scale Angevin invasion of Byzantium was in the works.

If he had known how stretched Charles's resources were, Michael might have felt more reassured. The twin demands of the Holy Land crusade and the Achaian expedition were pressing the Angevin military machine to the limit. On March 15, 1270, Louis IX led his crusade out of Paris on the journey south to Aigues-Mortes. In a sign that the brothers were coordinating their actions, Charles had instructed an official two days earlier to ship food supplies from the mainland to Sicily "so that they might be abundant there for the journey of Louis IX, [who is] going over with his army to parts beyond the sea against the enemies of the Holy Roman Church and of the Christian faith."⁶² The arrangements the brothers had made in July 1269 remained in place: Louis was coming to Sicily and Charles would meet him there with supplies at the ready.

One of the reasons Charles remained reluctant to join the crusade in person is that he had yet to resolve his differences with al-Mustansir of Tunis. In late April 1270, as Louis was approaching Aigues-Mortes, Charles arranged a "special mission" to Tunis. The Dominican Brother Berenger was part of the embassy, "along with other special ambassadors." Berenger had just returned from meeting Baybars in Cairo in January.⁶³ Our best source for this second round of negotiations between Charles and al-Mustansir is Pierre of Condé, who served as a clerk to Louis IX on the Tunis Crusade and wrote letters to colleagues back home. During the crusade, Pierre apparently spoke several times to a knight who represented Charles in these exchanges. This knight told Pierre that he had asked for a renewal of the commercial access fee at its previous rate, along with payment of arrears "from the time of Manfred and Frederick."⁶⁴ The implication here is that al-Mustansir had carried on with Abu Zakariya's payments to Emperor Frederick II but at some point had stopped them, perhaps at Frederick's death in 1250 or during King Manfred's reign (1258–66). In other words, Charles was claiming arrears going back potentially as far as nineteen years (1250–69). Even if we leave aside whether Charles had any right to these back payments, this was quite the request. While firm information is lacking on Hafsid payments to the *Regno* in this period, Charles's claim does not jibe with the report of Saba Malaspina, who was a contemporary and followed Sicilian affairs closely.

⁶² Lefevre, no. 65.

⁶³ *RCA*, vol. 4: pp. 73–4, no. 476 (Lefevre, no. 82); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 43, no. 190 (Lefevre, no. 84).

⁶⁴ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu November 18, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: pp. 667–8.

Saba says that at the time of Charles's arrival in Tunis (late August 1270), al-Mustansir had withheld money for three years, which corresponds with the arrival of the Hohenstaufen/Hafsid expeditionary force on Sicily in early September 1267, a logical time to renounce any previous arrangements with the *Regno*.⁶⁵ According to Pierre of Condé, al-Mustansir's offer was closer to Saba's timeline. The emir was willing to renew payments, but only from Charles's accession in 1266. Negotiations foundered on this point and the Angevin embassy left Tunis without an agreement.

Pierre of Condé offers a limited view of the negotiations, focusing on financial issues to the exclusion of the security concerns that also mattered to both parties. Nonetheless, the monetary dispute alone exposes the shifting balance of power between the Hafsids and the Angevins. The question under discussion was not whether the emir would make payments to Charles, but for how much. With Charles weighed down by debt and campaigning on multiple fronts, his envoys might have been tempted to accept a lesser offer that would bring in immediate cash. Instead, confident in the strength of their bargaining position, they held out for more.

In early May 1270, while Brother Berenger was holding talks with his Tunisian counterparts, Louis arrived in Aigues-Mortes. The Genoese fleet that was supposed to be waiting for him there was nowhere to be seen. By the May 10 deadline for delivery, only five of the seven new ships Louis had commissioned were finished, while the vessels he had leased had not left Genoa.⁶⁶ A long wait for the boats looked unavoidable. It would be difficult to reach Syracuse by June 24 as planned, while the delay would also eat into the precious summer sailing season. If it dragged on long enough, the expedition might have to halt for the winter before carrying on to the Levant.

Charles was dealing with a shipping crisis of his own in May 1270. He had launched the first Achaian expedition in anticipation of Michael VIII attacking Prince Guillaume when the truce between them expired. In late spring 1270, this hypothetical threat became real. The emperor assembled a squadron of Greek, Turkish, and Cuman ships and sent it toward Achaia.⁶⁷ Despite Charles's other commitments—to diplomacy with Tunis, the marriage alliance with Hungary, and the Holy Land crusade—his response was immediate. On May 5, he ordered all royal ships in Apulia to be brought to Brindisi and prepared to sail on the arrival of Anselm of Toucy, the commander of the expedition.⁶⁸ On May 11, he sketched out a plan for a squadron of twenty-five vessels, including war

⁶⁵ Saba Malaspina, pp. 228–9.

⁶⁷ Borghese, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 556.

⁶⁸ RCA, vol. 5: p. 62, no. 273 (Lefevre, no. 95).

galleys and horse transports (*teride*), to be assembled from royal vessels and from those that had just picked up Princess Maria of Hungary from Dalmatia for her marriage to Prince Charles. Though the aim was “to open the hand of our power in aid of the prince of Achaia,” this was very much an Angevin expeditionary force. Each war galley was to carry the royal arms on a banner and a flag.⁶⁹

Given how long it had taken to assemble the first Achaian expedition, and how extended the preparations for the Holy Land crusade had been, the departure deadline seems ambitious: June 9, 1270, or about a month after the first announcement of the plan.⁷⁰ Charles’s orders set off a scramble to find boats, crews, food, and the money to pay for it all. Angevin officials called for another round of the widely loathed *subventio generalis*, a general levy on subjects of the *Regno*. In his desperation to meet Charles’s demands, one bureaucrat forced the clergy of Bari to pay it, though they were normally exempt.⁷¹ Rounding up crews also proved a challenge. Time-honored techniques of compulsion—the premodern version of press-ganging—had to be employed.

Part of the problem was that the second Achaian expedition had to be organized just as preparations for Louis’s arrival in Sicily were peaking. It must be said that Charles was not afraid of multitasking. Could a new administration, recovering from a revolt, simultaneously arrange: (1) a large-scale amphibious military operation launching from the southeastern coast of mainland Italy; (2) the resupplying and rearming of a crusade sailing into Syracuse from southern France; and (3) the king of Sicily’s first visit to the island since the conquest? One way or the other, Charles was determined to find out.

Through May and early June, Charles continued to act on the assumption that he would be meeting the crusade in Sicily. He sent Pierre of Stampis, clerk of the royal kitchen, to the island to determine what the Angevin court would need during its stay.⁷² He instructed mainland officials to be ready to send supplies there if necessary.⁷³ Administrators were also authorized to grant commercial licenses to merchants wanting to trade wheat during the king’s visit.⁷⁴ Under normal circumstances, shipping the royal party across the Straits of Messina would have been a challenge, but a surmountable one. With everything else that was going on, though, it was looking like they might have to swim for it. On June 16,

⁶⁹ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 67, no. 294 (Lefevre, no. 106).

⁷⁰ *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 69–70, no. 303 (Lefevre, no. 113).

⁷² *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 39, nos. 173–5 (Lefevre, no. 97).

⁷³ *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 28–9, nos. 131–2 (Lefevre, no. 105).

⁷¹ Borghese, p. 53.

⁷⁴ Lefevre, no. 110.

Charles had to write to the commune of Zara, the Adriatic port city, with a humbling request:

Because of the aid [in the form] of ships, which we at present are sending to the prince of Achaia, also because we need to meet our brother Louis by sea in Sicily, and for bringing over our daughter, the future wife of the heir of the king of Hungary, to the *Regno* . . . we ask that three of your galleys be sent to us, decently armed, into the port of Siponto if it pleases . . .⁷⁵

Charles ended the letter by promising to lease the ships at a good rate, though it was not clear where he would find the money. Two days earlier, he had had to beg the College of Cardinals for a delay in paying the annual tribute (*censum*) he owed the Apostolic See. He offered to pay half of the 8,000 pounds of gold he owed right away and the rest on All Saints (November 1).⁷⁶ It looked as if Charles was going to need some kind of financial windfall before then if he were to cover the costs of his military commitments.

On June 19, 1270, three days after telling the commune of Zara that he would be seeing his brother in Sicily, and five days before the meeting was to take place, Charles issued another order about his visit to the island. The subject was livestock. Pierre of Stampis, the kitchen clerk, had already rounded up 1,500 pigs and 1,500 cows in Calabria and was ready to ship them to Sicily. Charles suggested that he buy more pigs, 500 to be exact, and that he have some of the livestock sent to Messina and the rest to an unnamed other city on the island, where they should be available by July 9.⁷⁷

This letter about cows and pigs is the best evidence we have for dating the diversion to Tunis. That is because it differs in two ways from previous royal instructions about the expedition. First, it says only that Charles was going to Sicily, not that he was meeting his brother there. Second, it gives July 9 as the expected date of Charles's arrival in the unnamed city, rather than the previously agreed June 24 in Syracuse. From June 19 onwards, Angevin documents refer only to Charles's passage to Sicily and do not mention a rendezvous with Louis. The French king would not be coming to Syracuse after all, and Charles knew it.

On July 2, 1270, with the Genoese ships finally available, the *Montjoie* weighed anchor with King Louis IX on board. Three days later, Charles made the crossing from Naples to Messina, on galleys crewed by rowers he had to borrow from Provence.⁷⁸ The brothers were still acting in concert,

⁷⁵ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 83, no. 353 (Lefevre, no. 132).

⁷⁶ *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 80–1, no. 346 (Lefevre, no. 131).

⁷⁷ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 81, no. 347 (Lefevre, no. 136).

⁷⁸ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 31, no. 142 (Lefevre, no. 156); the last document the Angevin chancery issued from Naples is dated July 5, 1270.

but were following a new plan. On July 10, the *Montjoie* and much of the crusader fleet landed at Cagliari, on the southern coast of Sardinia. At a war council held there over July 12 and 13, 1270, Louis announced publicly for the first time that Tunis was the target of the crusade. On the 14th, Charles established his court in Palermo. For the moment, he made no move to join the expedition.⁷⁹

Louis's soldiers were shocked when they realized where they were going. Up until then, the king had maintained operational secrecy. Not even Baybars, with his peerless intelligence network, had been able to discover the crusade's destination. His spies heard rumors that a major expedition was in the works from merchants trading between Alexandria and Crete, but these merchants could not specify the target.⁸⁰ The Genoese sailors who accompanied the king were surprised to find out they were crusading against a major trading partner. Many of the Genoese were so sure the fleet was sailing to the Levant that they had drawn up bills of exchange to be honored in Syria.⁸¹ The legate, Raoul Grosparmi, cardinal-bishop of Albano, had to reassure the crusaders that they would not be abrogating their vows to aid the Holy Land if they went to Tunis instead.⁸²

The diversion was a double shock, provoked by the secrecy surrounding the decision, certainly, but also by the strangeness of the choice. It is easier to explain the secrecy than the strangeness. First, the decision involved only Charles, Louis, and their closest advisors. The brothers coordinated closely during the run-up to the crusade in spring and early summer 1270. The other members of the anti-Mamluk coalition—Aragon, Genoa, Byzantium, and the Ilkhanate—were excluded from this inner circle. The diplomatic realignment initiated by Charles with Baybars and by al-Mustansir with Louis had had its effect. Second, the choice was made late. Charles only changed his planning for the crusade between June 16 and 19, 1270. Allowing enough time for Louis and Charles to communicate between Aigues-Mortes and Naples, we can pinpoint the diversion to mid-May–early June 1270.

Making the decision at the last minute and without external consultation allowed Louis and Charles to maintain the element of surprise. So too did their choice of target: few at the time saw a connection between Tunis and the struggle between Mamluk Egypt and the crusader states. The

⁷⁹ Primat, pp. 41–4; *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 45, no. 198 (Lefevre, no. 162).

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 179, vol. 2: p. 141.

⁸¹ Belgrano, *Documenti inediti*, nos. 263–70 (dated April 24–May 3, 1270); Laura Balletto, "Fonti notarili genovesi del secondo duecento per la storia del Regno latino di Gerusalemme," in *I comuni italiani nel Regno crociato di Gerusalemme*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi and Benjamin Z. Kedar (Genoa: Università di Genova, 1986), pp. 234–5, fn. 166.

⁸² Primat, p. 44.

events of late spring and early summer 1270—the return of Charles’s diplomatic mission from Tunis, the launching of the second Achaian expedition, and the delayed arrival of the Genoese fleet at Aigues-Mortes—provide one essential context in which to place the brothers’ decision. The world of expanded diplomatic horizons in which the leading figures of the Tunis Crusade operated offers a second. In this interconnected space of conflict and collaboration, where interests had to be pursued multilaterally if they were to be pursued at all, strange-seeming alliances and antipathies were actually far from unusual. We will return to these contexts that help make sense of the diversion to Tunis—one temporally circumscribed, the other geographically broad—in Chapter 6. Before we do, we must consider a third: the expedition itself, which got under way in mid-March 1270 with a ceremony at Saint-Denis, in the same church where the Tunisian envoys had witnessed Louis stand as godfather to a “certain famous Jew” the previous October.

4

The Crusade Begins

King Louis IX had been trying to make good for the disaster of his first crusade for the better part of two decades by the time he assembled his family and leading barons at Saint-Denis in March 1270 for the launch of his second. The chance for redemption was now at hand. For all who took the spiritual dimension of crusading seriously, waging holy war was a penitential act. In order to be efficacious, it had to be carried out in a state of spiritual purity. As the formula of the Holy Land crusade indulgence ran, only those who were “truly penitent” could earn full forgiveness of the punishment due to sin.¹ To achieve this status, Louis had remade himself and his realm since his return from Syria.

These efforts intensified in the run-up to the crusade. To win prayers for the new campaign, he made gifts from the relics of Christ’s passion, which were among the most precious he possessed and for which he had built Sainte-Chapelle. The bishop of Clermont, the Dominicans of Rouen, and a convent in Blois received these spiritual treasures.² Louis also toured the kingdom, visiting areas that had not seen much of him before: Tours, Ham, Vendôme, and Meaux. As he traveled, he dispensed justice to his subjects. To ease the burden of his presence on the communities he visited, he reduced the traditional charge on a town for hosting the royal court—the *gîte*.³ No one—save perhaps the clergy, from whom he continued to collect the tenth—could accuse him of financially exploiting his people for the sake of the crusade this time around. His Christian people, that is. He imposed another *captio* (taking) on Jewish moneylending, and stepped up conversion efforts among the Jews of Paris, compelling them to attend sermons by the Dominican and converted Jew Brother

¹ For Pope Innocent III’s classic formulation, see his proclamation of the Fifth Crusade in the bull *Quia maior*: Georgine Tangl, *Studien zum Register Innocenz’ III* (Weimar: H. Bohlhaus, 1929), pp. 88–97.

² Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 551–2; William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 215.

³ Jordan, *Louis IX*, pp. 147–50.

Paul Christian.⁴ He had done everything he could to be ready. All that remained were the rituals of departure.

At Saint-Denis, he gathered his sons around him. Jean Tristan, count of Nevers, Pierre, count of Alençon, and Philippe le Hardi (the bold), the heir to the throne, would all be going on the crusade. This in itself was a testament to how important the campaign was to Louis. When King Jaume I of Aragon had set out on his crusade, he had brought his illegitimate sons along while prudently leaving his heir, Pere, behind. If Louis's crusade went badly, the Capetian dynasty faced extinction. In the church, Louis prayed for a better result. He heard mass sitting among the monks in the choir, below the raised seat of the abbot. When it was done he received the pilgrim's scrip (a small purse) and staff. Then the banner of Saint-Denis—the oriflamme—was taken up from the altar. This was the standard of the French army on the march. Louis recommended the kingdom to the protection of its patron saint, a gesture he meant literally.⁵ Along with Simon, lord of Nesle, he appointed Mathieu of Vendôme, abbot of Saint-Denis, as regent in his absence.⁶ The abbot blessed the king, his sons, and other leading barons before sending them on their way.

They began the journey to the Holy Land—which is still where everyone thought they were going—that same day. The king spent the first night of the march in the forest of Vincennes. It was a place of deep significance to him. It was there, often sitting under a tree, that he had built his reputation as a just king to his Christian subjects. The next morning, he said goodbye to his wife, Marguerite of Provence. She had come on his first crusade and helped save it from ruin. She had held on to Damietta after Louis was captured in the delta, thus preserving the key bargaining chip that enabled the crusaders to ransom themselves. She had pleaded with the Italian merchants not to abandon the city from her sickbed, having just given birth to Jean Tristan, the future count of Nevers who was now joining his father on the new campaign. It is hard to imagine what she felt as she watched Louis lead her son away. As it turned out, she would not see either of them again.⁷

From Vincennes, Louis progressed slowly toward Aigues-Mortes. The May 10 due date for the arrival of the Genoese fleet meant he was in no hurry. He passed through Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Melun, Sens,

⁴ Michael Lower, "Conversion and St. Louis's Last Crusade," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58 (2007): pp. 223–5.

⁵ Primat, p. 39; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 440.

⁶ Sternfeld, pp. 332–3 (appendix A, no. 20).

⁷ Primat, pp. 39–40; *Gesta Ludovici*, pp. 440–2. For Marguerite of Provence in Damietta, see Joinville, pp. 378–80 (Smith, p. 244).

Auxerre, and Vézelay. By mid-April, he had reached Cluny, where he celebrated Easter and stayed for four days. From there, he picked up the Rhône River valley, following it south through Mâcon, Lyon, and Vienne, before crossing the river at Beaucaire and turning southwest toward Aigues-Mortes and the Mediterranean.⁸

AIGUES-MORTES

Louis arrived to find that few others had kept to the schedule announced two years before. He was not happy to see so few crusaders in the port. When he was out riding with the bishop of Paris a few days after his arrival, he complained, like the older man he was, about how “few men today . . . have the needs of the cross and Holy Church at heart.”⁹ In fact, it was just as well that not many crusaders had arrived, because there were no ships to sail them anywhere. The Genoese fleet was nowhere to be seen.

Soon enough, crusaders, if not ships, began to appear. The army that assembled for Louis’s second crusade was diverse and fairly large by the standards of the day. At its core were the king’s family and household: his brother Alphonse, his sons, his daughter Isabelle, countess of Champagne and queen of Navarre, his son-in-law Thibaut V, count of Champagne and king of Navarre, his nephew Robert of Artois, the knights and long-time counselors Pierre le Chambellan (the chamberlain), Alphonse of Brienne, Bouchard of Vendôme, Gautier of Nemours, Herbert of Villiers, and Érard of Valery among many others. Joining them were the leaders of aristocratic French families that had filled the ranks of crusading expeditions for generations: the counts of Flanders, Saint-Pol, Ponthieu, Guines, Eu, Dreux, Fors, Luxembourg, Auxerre, Dammartin, Roussillon, and Brittany. Although Queen Marguerite stayed home, many French noblewomen participated in the campaign, not just Isabelle of Navarre but also the countess of Poitiers, the countess of Artois, and Isabel of Aragon, Philippe le Hardi’s wife.¹⁰ There were contingents from outside the northern French lands as well, from Provence, Catalonia, and Frisia. Delayed by heavy winds off Borkum, the Frisians had only reached

⁸ Primat, pp. 39–40; *Gesta Ludovici*, pp. 440–2; Sternfeld, p. 200; Mollat, p. 290; Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 556.

⁹ Primat, p. 40.

¹⁰ Primat, p. 39; *Layettes*, nos. 5706 (countess of Poitiers), 5699 (count of Fors); “Liste des chevaliers croisés avec Saint Louis en 1269,” *RHGF*, vol. 20: pp. 305–8; Louis IX, “Letter to Abbot Mathieu July 25, 1270,” in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 664; Mollat, p. 290; Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 550.

Flanders by May 1270.¹¹ Prince Edward of England, to whom Louis had loaned 70,000 *livres tournois* for expenses, was not due in Aigues-Mortes until late August. Given the size of the contingents involved, they may have needed to stagger the departures of the French and English-Gascon expeditions, even if it meant a less concentrated military strike against Baybars.¹² Other crusaders made arrangements to depart from Marseille, while Louis may also have brought a small force of Turcoples, Turkish-speaking (but not necessarily Muslim) mounted archers who were often employed as auxiliaries in the crusader states.¹³ When the Genoese finally appeared, they brought a sizable force of sailors and marines. Their plan was to regain a foothold in Acre, where they had been losing ground to Venice and Pisa.¹⁴ The best estimates we have for the size of Louis's second crusade place it between 10,000 and 15,000 participants.¹⁵

Aigues-Mortes was not big enough to hold all the crusaders who had gathered there. Many barons fled the crowds and growing summer heat for villages above the port, where they could wait for the Genoese in greater comfort. Alphonse of Poitiers chose Aimargues, while Louis stayed in Vauvert.¹⁶ The delay allowed another diplomatic embassy from Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos to catch up with the king before he set sail. The envoys' request, and what they could offer in exchange, remained the same as before: church union with Rome in return for restraining Charles of Anjou. Whether either of these conditions could be met was debatable. Although Pope Clement IV had died a year and a half earlier, the College of Cardinals had yet to elect his successor. While the envoys regarded Louis as the *de facto* leader of western Christendom during the papal interregnum, he explained to them that he alone could not end the schism. Nor was it clear that he could keep Charles away from Byzantium. As of mid-May 1270, Louis had failed to extract a commitment from Charles to join his own crusade, let alone a promise not to pursue other interests in the eastern Mediterranean. What Louis could do, though, was pass along Michael's request for negotiations to the cardinals sitting in conclave in Viterbo. This was a greater concession than it might seem at first glance. The envoys could return home safe in the knowledge

¹¹ Sternfeld, p. 218; Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 550.

¹² Simon Lloyd, "The Lord Edward's Crusade, 1270–2: Its Setting and Significance," in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Cambridge: Boydell Press, 1984), p. 124.

¹³ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 373; al-Khazandari, p. 151.

¹⁴ *Annali Genovesi*, vol. 4: pp. 131–2.

¹⁵ Strayer, p. 515; Mollat, p. 294.

¹⁶ *Layettes*, no. 5706; Primat, p. 41.

that the king was open to further discussions over union and would not be diverting his army to Constantinople in a replay of the Fourth Crusade.¹⁷

From Vauvert, Louis moved to Saint-Gilles, where he celebrated Pentecost on June 9. By now, the ships had arrived in Aigues-Mortes, but they still needed fitting out for the sea journey. In the king's absence, the situation in the port city had deteriorated. The footsoldiers fought among themselves as they waited around for something to happen. A pitched battle broke out in the streets between northern French soldiers and a momentarily united confederacy of Provençals and Catalans. In the "raging tumult" that ensued, the French drove the Provençals and the Catalans back toward the harbor. When the southerners jumped in the water and tried to swim for the boats, the French followed them in up to their necks. If the chronicler Guillaume of Nangis is to be believed, over a hundred men died in the battle. He blamed the violence on "the evil-doing of malignant spirits," though lingering tensions over the Albigensian Crusades (1209–29) and Aragonese–Capetian rivalry over Provence might have played a part as well. When Louis learned what had happened, he rushed back to town and had the instigators hanged from a gibbet. The episode was taken as a bad omen for the coming campaign.¹⁸

Breaches were opening in the united front Louis had hoped to present to Baybars. Over the last few days before departure, the king did what he could to repair the damage. Once the ships were ready, he waived the fine the Genoese owed him for being late, which was not a bad idea since he would soon be entrusting himself to their care on the open seas.¹⁹ He also wrote to his regents Mathieu of Vendôme and Simon of Nesle with some final instructions for the kingdom. Since his return from Egypt, he had taken harsh measures to suppress blasphemy. With departure in sight, he feared he had not done enough. "If perhaps regarding this," he worried, "some reform or addition needs to be made, the better to punish this divine offense, you should be zealous to carry out what could effectively abolish from our kingdom whatever manner of habitual sin, or the corruption of such a criminal habit." Prostitution remained a concern as well. He ordered the regents to "entirely exterminate" prostitutes from the realm, while also taking care to "fully purge" the land of "shameful things, shameful men, and public malefactors."²⁰ To the last, he struggled to realize his vision of a kingdom morally purified before God.

On July 1, 1270, Louis heard mass and boarded the *Montjoie*. The next morning, with his son Pierre, count of Alençon, he set sail for Sardinia,

¹⁷ Sternfeld, pp. 334–7 (appendix A, no. 22); *Layettes*, nos. 5691–3.

¹⁸ Primat, p. 40; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 442.

¹⁹ Sternfeld, p. 218.

²⁰ Louis IX, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu of Saint-Denis, June 25, 1270."

where the fleet would halt for a council of war. Philippe le Hardi and Jean Tristan sailed with their families on their own ships. They found the Gulf of Lion every bit as difficult as Jaume of Aragon had eighteen months before. After two days of good sailing, they ran into foul weather. The sea calmed again once they left the Gulf, but they encountered more storms as they neared Sardinia. As the ships were tossed about in the high seas, the water supply became contaminated and many crusaders fell ill. Louis decided it was a good time to modify his will.²¹

After five days had passed with no sign of landfall, the northern French crusaders, landlubbers all, began to wonder if the Genoese sailors knew what they were doing. For the first time, a French admiral was in command of the fleet. It is not clear, however, whether Florent of Varennes, a knight from Picardy, had any nautical experience. Genoese crews were working the boats and Genoese captains were sailing them. The crusaders grumbled that they should have reached Cagliari in four days and that some of the ships had become lost at sea. In response, the Genoese mariners produced a map so the king could see where they were. This is the first appearance in a medieval French source of a map being used for naval navigation.²² Reassured that they were drawing close to Cagliari, Louis allowed the sailors to ride the waves at night under low sail to avoid foundering on the shore. Two days later, on July 8, the *Montjoie* made anchor. After eight days and many storms, with no fresh water and numerous invalids, the crusaders had completed the first stage of their voyage.²³

CAGLIARI

Florent of Varennes went to the citadel above the port to ask for fresh water and vegetables. The Sardinian garrison was not welcoming. He was not allowed into the castle and went away with just a few supplies. The next day, Florent came back, this time with Pierre le Chambellan. They asked to bring the sick ashore to recuperate. The governor of the citadel hesitated over this modest request. He could allow the king and some of his men into the citadel, but only on condition that they could protect him and his men from the Genoese. The castle belonged to the Pisans, archenemies of Genoa, enthusiastic Ghibellines, and, until April 1270, dogged opponents of Charles of Anjou. Without penetrating Muslim territory, Louis had led the crusade into a hostile environment.

²¹ Primat, pp. 41–2; *Gesta Ludovici*, pp. 442–4; *Layettes*, no. 5730.

²² Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 172.

²³ Primat, pp. 41–2; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 444.

The governor eventually allowed the sick to be housed in a Franciscan convent located outside the castle, closer to the harbor. The Genoese stayed on the ships. Louis and his counselors were allowed to come ashore, but they found the houses unsuitable, so they remained on their boats. Local residents provided a market, but food was scarce and the prices high: a chicken that could be bought for four *deniers* of Genoese money before the crusaders arrived now cost two *sous*.²⁴

The problems that the crusade encountered in Cagliari were predictable. Louis and his advisors knew that Genoa and Pisa were rivals: they had been trying to broker a peace among the maritime republics for years. Louis was also aware of Charles's own designs on Sardinia and Pisan hostility toward them. On the logistical side, it is not clear that anyone in Cagliari knew the crusade was coming. Sardinia was not prosperous: how could it resupply an army of 10,000–15,000 people without advanced warning? The contrast with Louis's first crusade is stark. He had stockpiled grain in Cyprus in such quantities and for so long that the piles, with the wheat sprouted on the tops, looked like small hills from a distance.²⁵ Nothing like that was in place in Cagliari. There is a surprisingly improvised quality to the opening stages of the king's final crusade, which suggests that the decision to stop in Cagliari was made at the last minute.

By July 11, 1270, the rest of the crusaders had arrived. Louis called together his advisors, the leading barons, and the papal legate, Raoul Grosparmi, cardinal-bishop of Albano, for a council of war on the *Montjoie*. Over July 12 and 13, Louis consulted with them about "where they could go that would be to the greater profit of Holy Church and for the exaltation of the Christian faith," and urged them "that they should take care according to the times and the state of affairs, and that they discern what would best profit men."²⁶ These words come from the chronicler Primat, our best source for the council, and they are worth taking seriously. In Primat's account, Louis defined the mission in a general way. He did not ask the crusaders how they could defeat Baybars, or even reconquer the Holy Land, but rather how they could aid the church, exalt the faith, and gain profit for themselves under current circumstances. Reframing the goal of the crusade in these broader terms paved the way for the king's next move: the suggestion to bring the army to Tunis before moving on to Egypt or Syria. This idea would not have come as a total surprise to many on the deck of the *Montjoie*. Sardinia made little sense as

²⁴ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3; pp. 664–6; Primat, p. 43.

²⁵ Joinville, pp. 222–4 (Smith, p. 178).

²⁶ Primat, p. 44.

a halt on the way to the Levant. More suitable options included Cyprus, where Louis had stayed for several months in 1249 en route to Damietta, or Syracuse, where he had been planning to meet Charles of Anjou until late May 1270. Stopping in Cagliari implied that the crusade was headed for the central Mediterranean. While some at the meeting may have guessed what was afoot, one of them knew for certain. Louis had had to tell the legate in advance, because only he could settle a point that was bound to arise: if the crusaders went to Tunis, would they gain the indulgence for aiding the Holy Land? It was only after the cardinal-bishop of Albano had reassured them on this front that discussion of the proposal could begin.

Consultation was an integral feature of medieval European military culture. Louis adhered to this principle to a degree that, to modern eyes at least, verged on the impractical. During the battle of Mansura on his first crusade, he had pulled his advisors out of combat for extended tactical discussions on several occasions, even when acting faster might have averted the disaster. He simply would not give orders without the agreement of his counselors. However predetermined the outcome of the council of Cagliari may appear, it was not an empty exercise. Louis's proposal was unprecedented: no crusade had ever gone to Tunis before. He needed his leading barons to agree to the plan. After "several opinions" had been expressed over two full days of discussion, they did.²⁷

There were several reasons why the barons might have found the plan appealing. Tunis was closer to France than Syria or Egypt. If the expedition did not advance beyond this initial stage, they could be home within a year, rather than the two or three that the Holy Land campaign would require. Tunis was also known to be rich; its reputation as a commercial powerhouse had begun to spread north of the Alps. At the same time, it was not considered aggressive or confrontational. Al-Mustansir's military campaigns were directed against rivals in Ifriqiya and the Maghreb, not Europe. The plunder gained from conquering the city might be enough to make their fortunes and fund the next phase of the campaign. The parallel with the Fourth Crusade—when some northern French crusaders agreed to support a Byzantine pretender's bid for the throne on the promise of a massive cash reward—is obvious. Tunis also had the advantage of not being Egypt. The Egyptian campaign was not a distant memory for the barons. Some of them had lived through its horrors—the disease, the near-starvation, the humiliations and deprivations of captivity—and all of them

²⁷ Primat, p. 44; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 446; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 21 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 116); Louis IX, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, July 25, 1270"; Pierre de Conde, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

knew someone who had. In the meantime, Baybars had strengthened the country's defenses and degraded those of the crusader states. Tunis was a softer target. Under the circumstances, it was easy to become convinced of something that was not really true: that al-Mustansir was Baybars's ally and supplied him with weapons and soldiers, and that a strike against the emir would eliminate a source of aid to the crusader states' greatest enemy.²⁸

With the first goal of the campaign decided, the expedition prepared to leave Cagliari. Rumors were circulating that some crusaders were planning to torch the place before they left. Primat was sorry that Charles of Anjou had not been around to deal with the garrison, which he would have destroyed "in only a moment." Thankful that Louis was not willing to turn his arms on fellow Christians, a delegation from the citadel presented the king with twenty jars of Greek wine. He refused the gift and asked them to look after the invalids he was leaving behind. On July 15, 1270, the fleet sailed for Tunis.²⁹

TUNIS

A smooth and rapid crossing swept the crusaders into the port of Tunis just two days later. The Hafsid capital was taken by surprise. European ships were still moored in Tunis's harbor and European merchants were working in its *funduks*. Genoese traders watched their compatriots arrive with crossbows and war galleys, ready to place them and their trading partners under siege.³⁰

There is never a good time to be attacked by a large naval expedition from overseas. That said, al-Mustansir was probably in a better position to withstand this kind of event than he ever had been before. In 1267, workers completed the restoration of an old Roman aqueduct that was the major water source for Tunis. Over seventeen years of construction, they had repaired the arches and conduits and added two extensions, one emptying into a reservoir near the Great Mosque, the other into the pleasure garden at Abu Fihir. The water supply was still far from ample, but it was improved; Tunis would be able to withstand a longer siege as a result.³¹

The following year saw the resolution of another domestic challenge: Dawawida Bedouin resistance to Hafsid rule. Despite two unsuccessful

²⁸ A number of chroniclers, all drawing on a lost common source, make these final points, including the continuation of Gerard of Frachet, the continuation of Otto of Freising, the anonymous *Gesta Ludovici* and the chronicle of Bernard Gui: see Sternfeld, p. 378.

²⁹ Primat, pp. 44–5; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

³⁰ *Annali Genovesi*, p. 132.

³¹ Paul Sebag, *Tunis: Histoire d'une ville* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), p. 133.

revolts, the Dawawida remained a force in their strongholds south of Qasantina. Fear of another uprising was one reason al-Mustansir had not intervened more directly in Sicily during the Hohenstaufen insurgency. Back in Ifriqiya, the shoe was on the other foot. Over the course of 1268, the emir executed a classic counterinsurgency strategy against the tribe. First, he assembled a coalition of rivals who stood to gain from their downfall. These included the Bedouin Ku'ub, Dabbab, and some clans of the Banu Hilal, along with the Berber Sadwikish. Combining these with his Christian mercenary guard, he led the allies against the Dawawida and drove them south into the Sahara. Once the Bedouin were removed from their traditional homeland, he tried to divide them by luring one of their factions to his side. To maintain the facade of official intransigence toward them, he opened up a back channel line of communication. He asked Abu Hilal-Iyad, an Almohad shaykh and the Hafsid governor of Bijaya, to cultivate a leading member of the tribe. Abu Hilal found his man in Mahdi b. 'Asakir, the head of the Banu 'Asakir, one of the two main branches of the Dawawida. In return for being named chief of the entire tribe, Mahdi b. 'Asakir agreed to settle with al-Mustansir. This left the emir free to deal with the other branch of the Dawawida, the Banu Mas'ud, who were now dangerously isolated. Their leader, Shibl b. Musa, led a delegation to the emir's camp at Zaghaya, which included his brother and several cousins. On their arrival, al-Mustansir arrested them and had their baggage pillaged; he then had their heads cut off and sent south for public display in Biskra. Having decapitated the leadership, he launched a surprise attack against the remainder of the Banu Mas'ud and drove them from their camp, taking large quantities of plunder in the process. The survivors of the assault fled west into exile with the 'Abd al-Wadids of Tlemcen. Al-Mustansir returned to Tunis, momentarily free of internal threats to his rule.³²

External threats were another matter, however. Under al-Mustansir, peaceful trade overseas had funded state-building at home. As 1269 turned into 1270, this pattern threatened to reverse itself. No sooner had he marginalized his major Bedouin rivals than relations with the Capetians deteriorated. The embassy al-Mustansir had sent to Naples and Paris in autumn 1269 had not resolved the diplomatic crisis. Nor, apparently, had Brother Berenger's visit to Tunis in May 1270. The risk of an attack from either Charles or Louis was remote, but it was not beyond the bounds of possibility. It is unlikely that Brother Berenger had hidden from al-Mustansir the extent of the military build-up on Sicily and the

³² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6; pp. 661–3 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2; pp. 356–9); Brunschvig, vol. 1: pp. 48–9; Rougghi, p. 35.

(presumed) imminent arrival of Louis's crusade there: this information was a source of leverage in the negotiation over the wheat import license. Louis's long procession southward from Saint-Denis to Aigues-Mortes had also allowed time for rumors about his intentions to circulate in the Islamic Mediterranean. Ibn Khaldun reported that "these preparations [of Louis IX] spread great inquietude along all frontiers of importance."³³ By late May 1270, Baybars had received intelligence that Louis was on the move.³⁴ Given his own difficulties with the French king and his brother, it was only prudent for al-Mustansir to take precautions against an external attack. He ordered the walls of coastal towns to be repaired and grain depots to be set up in the major seaports. He may also have restricted European merchants from trading inland, although they remained active in Tunis.³⁵

Al-Mustansir's major concern on the eve of the crusade was the reliability of his army. Reflecting the social, ethnic, linguistic, and tribal diversity of the polity he ruled, it was heterogeneous in the extreme. Usually he liked it that way, because the diversity prevented one group from dominating the rest and allowed him to play off the various factions against each other. Arabic sources describe six major components of the military force he could deploy against the crusade: (1) the Almohad shaykhs and their followers, the ruling group from which the Hafsidids had originally emerged; (2) the Bedouin tribes who had rallied to the emirate during the campaign against the Dawawida, such as the Ku'ub, Dabbab, and perhaps some elements of the Banu Hilal; (3) Berber tribes, including the Sadwikhish, Wulhasa, and Huwara; (4) an Andalusí contingent under the command of Ibn Abi al-Husayn, which had been formed by Abu Zakariya and retained by al-Mustansir; (5) the Christian mercenary guard; and (6) the *jund*, which consisted of small security details stationed in Tunis and assigned to the more important provincial centers, such as Bijaya; they were more akin to a police force than an army unit. Other elements could be added to this list as well, although firm evidence of them operating against the crusaders is lacking. The Hafsid emirs often employed the *Ghuzz* (Turkish archers), Christian freedmen and renegades (as distinct from the free Europeans who served in the elite mercenary guard), and an urban militia (the so-called '*abid al-mahkzan*': "slaves of the government").³⁶

The groups varied in their allegiance to the emir. The Bedouin tribes were the least committed to his dynastic project, followed closely by the

³³ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 666 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 362).

³⁴ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 177, vol. 2: p. 140.

³⁵ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 666 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 362).

³⁶ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: pp. 454–6; al-Khazandari, pp. 151–2; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 668–70 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 365–7); Brunschwig, vol. 2: pp. 75–82.

Almohad shaykhs. The most loyal were the outsiders who could not afford to defy him: the Andalusis and the Christian mercenaries. A complicating factor in this conflict was the Latin Christian religious identification that the mercenaries shared with the invaders. The political differences, however, were stark. The mercenaries were mainly aligned with the Aragonese–Catalan–Hohenstaufen axis, while the crusaders were drawn primarily from Capetian and Angevin lands. Relations among these groups were more nuanced than a simple binary can express, but the opposition was strong enough to convince Jaume of Aragon, Louis's putative partner in the Holy Land crusade, to dispatch Catalan knights to Tunis once he realized it might fall to the French.³⁷ The mercenaries, in fact, would oppose the crusade more energetically than some of the emir's Muslim contingents.

CARTHAGE

Al-Mustansir faced a predictably divided council as he grappled with how to respond to the crusade. His Almohad advisors urged him to oppose a crusader landing. Once the Franks had consumed the food and water on their boats, they would have to withdraw. The Andalusis saw the situation differently. If the crusaders moved off Tunis, they might go to another town on the coast that was not as well protected, take it, and launch their invasion of the emirate from there. It would be better to let them come ashore where they would meet the stiffest resistance. The Andalusis also pointed out that it was difficult to land a large army in front of Tunis. The medieval city stood behind a lake that lay between it and the Mediterranean. It appeared as if the crusaders were going to disembark on the narrow peninsula that in turn separated the lake from the sea, which is known today as the Halq al-Wadi, or La Goulette. Why not let them set up camp there and suffer the consequences? To his later regret, al-Mustansir accepted this line of argument. He would not oppose a crusader landing.³⁸

The opening stage of the Tunis Crusade raises a question of semantics, or perhaps philosophy: can we call it a crusade when both sides refuse to fight? While al-Mustansir kept his troops inside the walls of Tunis, Louis refused at first to let his off the ships. Louis would only allow Florent of Varennes to explore the port of Tunis once it became clear that the ships anchored there had been abandoned. Meeting with no opposition, the

³⁷ *L'Espagne catalane*, p. 121.

³⁸ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 455; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 667–8 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 364–5).

admiral reported back to the king that he had occupied the peninsula and was in need of reinforcements for the advance inland. Louis was unhappy to hear this and complained that he had only sent Florent to reconnoiter, not actually to conquer anything. Louis consulted with his barons and after much discussion they decided to send Philippe Évreux and the master of the artillery down to the admiral. If they were happy with what they saw, they could all stay; if not, they should bring him back. After a quick look around, they hustled Florent back to the *Montjoie*, a decision that provoked grumbling among some who favored a more dynamic approach to crusading warfare.³⁹

Medieval commanders usually liked to avoid pitched battles because they feared taking casualties. But even in this context, Louis's approach to combat stood out as exceptionally risk-averse. After the conquest of Damietta in 1249, Louis had delayed his advance up the Nile for several months to wait for Alphonse of Poitiers to arrive with reinforcements. Mansura—the great set-piece confrontation of that campaign—scarred him for life. So he may have been reluctant to engage the Tunisians because he preferred once again to wait on developments. At the same time, his inaction is consistent with the conversion plan that his confessor Geoffrey of Beaulieu laid out in his account of the crusade. The idea was to make a show of force before the city to provide an excuse for al-Mustansir to accept Christianity. That is exactly what happened at the beginning of the Tunis Crusade: the army appeared, but it did not attack.⁴⁰

The next morning, July 18, Louis allowed the crusaders off the transports. Pierre of Condé thought the disembarkment was so chaotic that a hundred men could have stopped them if they had tried. But the crusaders encountered no opposition and began to set up camp on the Halq al-Wadi. As al-Mustansir's Andalusi advisors had anticipated, they soon discovered how difficult it was to deploy there. For a start, there was no fresh water. To find some, the Genoese proposed an attack on Carthage, which lay to the north of the peninsula. Much of the ancient city had fallen into ruins, save for a castle protected by deteriorating walls. Since Carthage was still inhabited, the Genoese reasoned, it must have a water source. The sailors offered to lead the operation, but asked the king for back-up. After considerable debate, Louis agreed to provide them with four "battles," the standard combat unit into which medieval European armies were organized, along with 500 crossbowmen. The rest of the army would stand guard over the camp during the assault. When the Genoese advanced toward Carthage, they found their way blocked by a tower that

³⁹ Primat, p. 45; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

⁴⁰ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 118).

guarded the northern exit off the Halq al-Wadi. Here they encountered resistance for the first time when the emir's soldiers tried to prevent them from breaking out on to the mainland. But the tower garrison gave way, allowing the sailors a clear run at the fortress of Carthage. They brought up their scaling ladders, climbed the walls, ran into the streets of the town, and cleared it: "every Saracen they could find they would cut off his head like they would a sheep." There was a network of caverns and tunnels underneath the town. When some Carthaginians tried to hide underground, the Genoese set fires to smoke them out. The corpses of those who suffocated were left to rot underground, filling Carthage with the smell of decomposing human flesh.⁴¹

Once the city was taken, the crusaders moved off the peninsula. Louis set up his tent just outside the castle in a valley dotted with irrigation wells. He preferred that to the unwholesome atmosphere inside the fortress. But life in the crusader camp was still uncomfortable. There was searing heat, which peaks in Tunis in late July and early August, and high winds that covered everything and everyone in dust and sand. Louis issued orders that no one should leave the camp without permission. This made sense in theory, because the crusaders were unfamiliar with the country and vulnerable to ambush, while the king himself remained determined to avoid confrontation. In practice, though, it was agonizing. The crusaders would see a footsoldier returning from patrol cut down in front of them, but would take no action to save him out of fear of violating the king's command.⁴²

JIHAD

Al-Mustansir regretted not having torn down the walls of Carthage sooner.⁴³ The crusaders now had a base of operations from which they could blockade the port, maintain their own supply lines to Sicily, Sardinia, and southern France, and advance on Tunis, if they wished. Still, he did not attempt to retake the fortress. Instead, he deployed his army about halfway between Carthage and Tunis, roughly where the airport is today.⁴⁴ He needed to block the path toward his capital because

⁴¹ Primat, p. 47; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270"; *Annali Genovesi*, pp. 132–3.

⁴² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 668 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 365); Primat, p. 47; Louis IX, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, July 25, 1270"; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

⁴³ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 668 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 366).

⁴⁴ Mohamed Talbi, "Saint Louis à Tunis," in *Les croisades*, ed. Robert Delort (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988), p. 73.

the city walls only surrounded the old medina, and large suburbs to the north and south lay unprotected beyond them.⁴⁵

After establishing his headquarters, al-Mustansir sent out a call for reinforcements. Two allies from the west responded. Abu Hilal-Iyad, the governor of Bijaya, brought troops from the area around Qasantina, while Abu Zayyan Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Qawi came at the head of the Banu Tujin, Zenata Berbers who supported al-Mustansir's claims in the central Maghreb against the 'Abd al-Wadids of Tlemcen.⁴⁶ In an attempt to attract recruits and unify his disparate forces, al-Mustansir declared a jihad against the invaders. Citing the Qur'an, he proclaimed to the people of Ifriqiya:

Go forth (whether equipped)
Lightly or heavily, and strive
And struggle, with your goods
And your persons, in the Cause
Of Allah. That is best
For you, if you (but) knew. (Qur'an, 9: 41)⁴⁷

His appeal proved effective. Ibn Khaldun said that, "the pious, jurists, marabouts, all ran to aid the jihad in person."⁴⁸ Other Arabic sources also refer to jurists (*al-muttawī'a*—holders of a diploma from the Great Mosque of Tunis) participating in the struggle against the crusaders.⁴⁹ Recruitment was heavy in the Sahel and around al-Qayrawan. Two popular shaykhs joined the holy war: Abu 'Ali Salim al-Qadidi and Abu 'Ali 'Ammar al-Ma'rufi, better known as Sidi 'Ammar.⁵⁰

Propaganda emphasized the value of a unified Islamic response to the crusade. A Tunisian poet named Ahmad b. Ismail al-Zayyan addressed a song of defiance to King Louis and his Franks:

Oh Frenchmen, this city is Egypt's sister
Prepare yourself for every bad thing possible that could happen to you.
This time the house of Luqman will be a tomb.
And your guards will be Munkar and Nakir.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Sebag, *Tunis*, p. 130.

⁴⁶ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 669 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 366); Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 60.

⁴⁷ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *An English Interpretation of the Holy Qur-an with Full Arabic Text* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1937), p. 279.

⁴⁸ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367).

⁴⁹ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 455. I am grateful to Nabil Matar for help rendering this term.

⁵⁰ Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 60.

⁵¹ Al-Maqrizi, vol. 1 (part 2): p. 365; English translation: Francesco Gabrieli, "Saint Louis in Tunisia," in *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E. J. Costello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 303–4; al-Shamma', p. 71.

According to Islamic tradition, Munkar and Nakir are the angels who interrogate the dead in their graves. Ibn Luqman was the head of the Ayyubid secretariat who had once owned the house where Louis had been imprisoned in Egypt. The reference to Ibn Luqman alludes to another poem that circulated in Egypt and the Maghreb during the run-up to Louis's second crusade. Writing before the destination was revealed, the Mamluk court poet Jamal al-Din b. Matruh predicted a bad end for the Frankish king if he attacked Egypt again:

Give the Frenchman, if you love him, a true statement from
those who offer sound advice:
'May God requite you for the slaughter that has befallen the
worshippers of Jesus the Messiah!
You came to Egypt, thirsting to conquer it and reckoning the
drumbeat but a gust of wind;
And so Time has carried you to a disaster which has made narrow
what was broad in your eyes:
While through your fine strategy you have brought all your men
to the inside of the tomb;
Of fifty thousand not one is seen who is not dead or
a wounded prisoner.
God grant you [more] triumphs of this ilk, that Jesus may
perhaps find relief from you.
If the Pope was satisfied with this, perchance fraud has
emanated from the counselor!
And tell them, if they think of coming back to take revenge
or for some sound purpose:
'Ibn Luqman's house is still there; the chains and the officer
Sabih have not gone away.'⁵²

Sabih al-Mu'azzami was an Ayyubid cavalry officer who guarded Louis when he was a prisoner in Egypt. This sardonic depiction of Louis as a deluded and incompetent servant to his faith first appeared in Ibn Wasil's account of the king's crusades. When later chroniclers included the poem in their histories, they often set it within a framing narrative of personal confrontation. Baybars sends an envoy to Paris, who recites the poem to Louis in person.⁵³ The king is appropriately intimidated, thinks better of seeking revenge on Egypt, and heads to Tunis instead. By celebrating

⁵² Ibn Wasil, pp. 71–2 (*Seventh Crusade*, p. 149). This is Jackson's excellent translation.

⁵³ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 666–7 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 363); Ibn al-Shamma', p. 71; Muhammad b. Abi al-Qasim b. Dinar al-Qarawani, *Al-Mu'nis fi akhbar Ifriqiya wa-Tunis* (Beirut: Dar al-Masira li-l-Sihafa wa-l-Tiba'a wa-l-Nashr, 1993), pp. 159–60; French translation: *Histoire de l'Afrique*, trans. Edmond Pellissier de Reynaud and Abel Remusat (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1845), pp. 228–9.

Tunis as “Egypt’s sister,” the Hafsid court poet offered his retort to this stratagem. Wherever Louis attacked the *dar al-Islam*, he would encounter the united strength of the community of believers.

As the crusaders established themselves on North African soil, an opportunity arose to turn this idealized vision of confrontation into reality. The problem was that if Egypt and Tunis were sisters, they were not the kind that got along. Dueling claims to the caliphate stoked tensions between them. While al-Mustansir made no effort to reach out to his overbearing neighbor, Baybars saw both a threat and an opportunity in Louis’s landing before Tunis.

By the late spring of 1270, the sultan was taking precautions against Louis’s return to the Levant. To facilitate troop movements in and out of the capital, Baybars linked the island bases of his Mamluk regiments to the mainland with bridges of boats. On learning that Frankish ships had captured two Muslim vessels in Alexandria harbor, he rushed back to Cairo, thinking that the Frankish attack had begun. It turned out to be a false alarm. Word arrived soon after from the governor of Alexandria that a crew from Crete had arrived in the port city with unexpected news: the Franks had landed in North Africa, defeated the Muslims, and were approaching Tunis. Though Tunis was about 1,600 miles west of Cairo, Baybars seems to have been concerned about Louis advancing on to his western flank. At the same time, dispensing aid to the Hafsids would project Mamluk power into the central Mediterranean. Baybars wrote to al-Mustansir that help was on the way and ordered the Bedouin tribes loyal to him around Barqa (Cyrenaica) to set out for Tunis. Along the way, they were to dig out wells for further reinforcements to follow. It looked as if Baybars was going to muscle in on al-Mustansir’s jihad with the Franks, whether al-Mustansir welcomed his involvement or not.⁵⁴

STALEMATE

As classically conceived, the external jihad entailed a struggle to expand the *dar al-Islam*. Al-Mustansir, however, had something different in mind. Once established in his camp, he remained rooted to the spot. “He always remained seated in his pavilion,” remarked Ibn Khaldun, while al-Yunini added that, “the lord of Tunis did not lead out his subjects to fight.”⁵⁵ He placed command of day-to-day operations in the hands of the Almohad

⁵⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, pp. 373–4; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 179–80, vol. 2: 141–2.

⁵⁵ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367); al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 455; al-Khazandari, p. 152; Ibn al-Shamma‘, p. 73.

Yahya b. Salih al-Hintati, while surrounding himself with a coterie of advisors. Among these were several other Almohad notables and Federico of Castile, who had returned from leading the anti-Angevin insurrection in Sicily.⁵⁶ His presence was another sign of the emir's unconventional approach to holy war.

Yahya b. Salih al-Hintati's remit was limited. He was not to engage the enemy directly, but rather wear it down and exhaust its resources through ambushes, raids, and ruses. Pierre of Condé reported that:

Many Saracens vexed us, and the call to arms was often made twice a day. But the Saracens did not dare approach our army en masse; they limited themselves to killing those they found alone, or scavenging or raiding too far . . . Whenever our men followed them, they fled; when our men retired, they provoked and plagued them with lances.⁵⁷

What made this strategy especially effective was Louis's own reluctance to commit to combat. However provoked the crusaders were, he would not allow them to leave the camp to chase the Tunisians.

Charles of Anjou also encouraged his brother's ultra-cautious approach. After Louis had written to him from Sardinia asking him to join the crusade, Charles sent his envoy Amaury of la Roche, grand prior of the Templars of France, to Tunis. Amaury arrived about July 25, too late to prevent the capture of Carthage. After that, though, he was a relentless advocate for stasis. He told Louis that Charles would be coming soon and that in the meantime the crusaders should not pursue the Tunisians beyond the camp. Charles was not opposed to punishing al-Mustansir for his role in the Hohenstaufen insurrection, but it would do Charles no good if Tunis were conquered without him. It was not just a question of losing out on the spoils. While French rule over Tunis would increase the security of his southern frontier, it would also deprive him of the tribute payment. With Charles's advice confirming his own inclinations, Louis continued to sit tight.⁵⁸

The Hafsids could not know how unwilling Louis was to march on Tunis. They began to play tricks on the crusaders to keep them away from the city. On July 25, 1270, two Catalan knights approached the crusader camp and asked to be taken to the king. When he received them, they told him that the "king of Tunis" had imprisoned his Christian mercenaries. If the crusaders advanced on Tunis, he would have the mercenaries beheaded. If the crusaders stayed away, he would set the soldiers free. Among the mercenary prisoners,

⁵⁶ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 669 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 366).

⁵⁷ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

⁵⁸ Primat, p. 50; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, July 27, 1270."

the knights singled out Federico of Castile by name, perhaps because he was related to Louis through Blanche of Castile, the king's mother. Federico, of course, was not the emir's prisoner; he was his aide-de-camp. By purporting to treat his Christian mercenaries as hostages, al-Mustansir was turning a potential drawback of using them in the campaign against the Franks—their shared religious identification—into an advantage.⁵⁹

The next day, the Hafsids tried a more elaborate ruse. As told by the chronicler Primat, the brothers Alphonse and Jean of Brienne were keeping watch when three Hafsid cavalry officers approached and asked to be made Christians. Jean led them back to his tent and placed them under guard. When he returned to his post, he found a hundred more Tunisian soldiers waiting, all clamoring for baptism. Distracted by their shouting, he failed to notice yet another group of Hafsid soldiers, who sprang an ambush on his men and killed up to sixty before escaping unharmed. Jean returned to his tent to confront his three Hafsid prisoners. With the help of a Dominican translator, the spokesman for the troika blamed the ambush on a jealous rival. He could prove the truth of his story if Jean would allow one of his companions to return to the Hafsid camp. This companion would then round up goods to sell and another 2,000 soldiers to cross over to the crusader side. If the man failed to return, Jean could deal with him as a traitor. Jean brought this proposal to the king, who was skeptical. But rather than let the man suffer the consequences of his deception, Louis ordered him and his companions to be returned to their own lines. Incredulous at their good fortune, the men returned home, having arranged the killing of some sixty crusaders and gotten a good look inside the crusader camp. Their release was accompanied by murmuring in the crusader camp at the "astonishing simplicity" of the Christians.⁶⁰

However improbable it may sound, it is unlikely that this story is entirely confected. Primat's chronicle is associated with the royal abbey of Saint-Denis. Why invent a tale that reflected so poorly on two distinguished French barons (Alphonse of Brienne was the count of Eu, while Jean was the butler of France) and the king himself? The ruse played on the crusaders' expectation that Tunisian Muslims were open to conversion. In this sense, it can be seen as a continuation of the conversion gambit that the Tunisian envoys attempted during their embassy to Paris in October 1269.

After the ambush, Louis had a trench dug around the crusader camp. Amaury of la Roche supervised. In the meantime, pressure was building

⁵⁹ Primat, p. 48; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 452.

⁶⁰ Primat, pp. 48–9; *Gesta Ludovici*, pp. 452–4.

on al-Mustansir to do something about the crusaders. Much of the criticism was aimed at the Almohad shaykhs who were serving as his commanders and military advisors. Al-Yunini insisted that everyone who fought the crusaders was a Bedouin, a Berber, or one of the “common people.”⁶¹ Al-Khazandari reported that of the 3,000 Almohad cavalry available, “not one among them went out to fight the Franks.” Only the “rabble” and the “mob” were willing to confront the enemy. He personified the lethargic Almohad response in the figure of a “man among the Almohads” who used henna and lounged around his house all day. When the *ghazi* warriors came in after a hard day’s fighting the infidel, he would politely inquire, “May God’s blessing be upon you, how did the war go for you today?” When asked why he would not go out and fight, he claimed he was waiting for the emir to call him to battle.⁶²

Toward the end of July, al-Mustansir’s calls to engage the enemy became more frequent as he stepped up his raids on the Franks. Amaury of la Roche’s trench-work surrounded the crusader camp but left a gap between it and the lake of Tunis. Beginning on July 27, and continuing regularly thereafter, the Hafsids would send raiding parties shooting through this gap toward the port.⁶³ The aim was to threaten the noblewomen staying on the ships and disrupt the crusader supply chain, which relied on deliveries from overseas. These raids became larger and more ambitious as Hafsid strategy shifted toward drawing the crusaders into battle. The Bedouin horsemen in particular tempted the Franks with their feigned retreats, the fighting style known in the Maghreb as *al-karr wa-l-farr* (“attack and withdrawal”).⁶⁴ Always, though, when the moment of truth arrived, Amaury of la Roche would call the crusaders back: “Lords, why do you want to go out? You have waited so long for the noble king of Sicily, who is supposed to be coming in two or three days, and now you want to go out and fight the Saracens?”⁶⁵

DISEASE AND DEATH

Amaury’s growing influence over tactics reflected a vacuum in the upper echelon of crusade leadership. The cause was an epidemic of disease, which Pierre of Condé described as “a certain fever” or “a certain fever with

⁶¹ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 456.

⁶² Al-Khazandari, pp. 151–2.

⁶³ Primat, p. 56; *Gesta Ludovici*, pp. 454–6.

⁶⁴ Michael Lower, “Medieval European Mercenaries in North Africa: The Value of Difference,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 14 (2016): p. 109.

⁶⁵ Primat, p. 55.

weakness," Primat as "stomach flu" and "ague fever," and Geoffrey of Beaulieu only as "great and deadly."⁶⁶ The vagueness of these descriptions makes it difficult to identify the culprit. Dysentery is often thought to have been responsible.⁶⁷ During his first crusade Louis suffered so badly from it that he had to have the seat of his pants cut away in order to continue on the march. That said, the accounts of the Tunis epidemic do not describe the loss of fluids that accompanies the disease. In any case, conditions in the crusader camp outside Carthage were conducive to the outbreak of various kinds of bacterial illness. Many people were living in a relatively confined space and the tents offered little protection against the summer heat. Access to fresh food was limited. On August 2 and 3, Louis sent to Sardinia and Sicily for supplies. The crusaders were relieved when a shipment of pigs and chickens arrived from Sicily on the 10th, although shortages remained severe. The policy of confining the soldiers to camp did not help. Those who felt less constrained by the king's prohibition went on raiding parties for food. On August 14, a hundred Genoese sailors, led by four Catalan knights, rowed over in their galleys to a Tunisian cattle hold, where they rustled seventy cows and forty calves. The livestock was welcome, but it was not enough. The water supply remained a problem as well. As the campaign dragged on, the corpses of humans and animals found their way into nearby rivers, wells, and lakes and fouled the drinking water. Al-Khazandari blamed the crusaders' troubles on hashish in the water. Why was it there? Even he could not explain it.⁶⁸

In early August, the king's son Jean Tristan fell ill. He was brought down from the tents to the ships, but failed to recover and died on August 3. His corpse was treated in typical fashion for French nobles of the time. The flesh was boiled away and the bones were packed up with aromatics for transfer back to France. Born in sorrow on his father's first crusade (thus his nickname, Tristan), Jean died in similar circumstances on the king's second. But Louis did not receive the heartbreaking news right away, because he himself had become sick the night before, along with another son, Philippe. This left the third royal sibling, Pierre, count of Alençon, with an agonizing choice: should he tell his father and brother what had happened, and risk further endangering their health? Or should

⁶⁶ Primat, p. 52; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, August 21, 1270," in Léopold Delisle, *Instructions adressées par le comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques aux correspondants du ministère de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts. Littérature latine et histoire du moyen âge* (Paris: Leroux, 1890), pp. 73–7; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 23 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 119).

⁶⁷ Jean Filliozat and Pierre Huard, "Les épidémies au temps de Saint Louis: La mort du roi," *Journal asiatique* 258 (1970): p. 40.

⁶⁸ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, August 21, 1270"; al-Khazandari, p. 152.

he deceive them until they began to convalesce? Pierre opted for secrecy. A week passed, and the king began to feel a little better. He asked his confessor, Geoffrey of Beaulieu, how Jean was doing. Louis was becoming suspicious and worried for his son. Rather than answer, Geoffrey began to cry. After finally composing himself, he told the king the truth.⁶⁹

The pace of the epidemic accelerated. The papal legate had passed away on August 7; the archdeacon of Paris succumbed on the 20th; the marshal, Gautier of Nemours, and the count of Vendôme on the 23rd. Many others would die in subsequent weeks, including Thibaut of Navarre, his wife Isabelle, Pierre le Chambellan, and Alphonse of Brienne. The same diseases that devastated the crusader camp struck Tunis as well, leading to many deaths among the soldiers and civilians of the city. Sidi 'Ammar, the shaykh who had answered al-Mustansir's call to jihad, died in the Hafsid camp. His tomb remained a site of popular veneration into the twentieth century.⁷⁰

Louis's recovery on August 10 proved temporary. By the night of August 23, his doctors believed he would not live until morning. At midnight, he received last rites from Geoffrey of Beaulieu. The next day, however, his fever receded a little. He received the Eucharist frequently and prayed aloud to Saint-Denis (patron of France), Sainte-Geneviève (patron of Paris), and Saint James (patron of pilgrims). He lay on a bed covered over with ashes, a mark of the penitent. A massive cross was set before him. As the fever came on again, he moved his lips while his confessors recited the prayers, but no sound came out. The intimates surrounding his deathbed strained to hear his final words. Were they prayers to Saint James? ("Lord, be the guardian and sanctifier of your people"); or to Saint-Denis? ("Grant us, we ask, for the sake of your love, that we may despise worldly success and fear none of its misfortunes"); or a verse from the psalms? ("I will go into your house, I will worship toward your holy temple, and I will give glory to your name"); or simply "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem"? He died on August 25, 1270, at about three o'clock in the morning. His son Philippe found solace in the realization that he passed away "at the very hour in which the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, breathed his last while dying on the cross for the life of the world."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, August 21, 1270"; Primat, pp. 51–2; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 23 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 119–20).

⁷⁰ Sternfeld, p. 245; Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 550; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 60.

⁷¹ Thibaut of Champagne, "Letter to Eudes of Chateauroux, cardinal-bishop of Tusculum, September 24, 1270," in Antoine-Jean Letronne, "Sur l'authenticité d'une lettre de Thibaud, roi de Navarre, relative à la mort de saint Louis," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 5 (1844): pp. 105–17; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 23 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 121); Guillaume

Not long before Louis died, a galley had appeared in the port of Tunis. The captain of the boat told the king's chamberlains that Charles of Anjou would be landing later that day. After so many delays and hesitations, Charles had finally joined the crusade, when his brother's death was near and his dream of a grand crusade had been shattered. When the chamberlains brought the news to Louis, he opened his eyes and smiled. Did he smile in anticipation of seeing his brother, or at the timing of the visit? Several hours later, Charles came ashore. Primat believed that he was about a third of a league (perhaps about a mile) from the camp when Louis passed away. Charles visited his brother Alphonse and his nephew Philippe, who was still sick. Then he went into the royal pavilion and saw Louis's corpse. He fell to the ground and kissed its feet with tears in his eyes. After his retainers helped him back up, he washed away the signs of his distress with a towel. Composing his face into the mask of command, he went out into the camp. The crusade that had worried him for years was now in his hands.⁷²

of Chartres, p. 37 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 149); Philippe III, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu and Lord Simon of Nesle, September 12, 1270," in Primat, pp. 62–3 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 61–3); Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 570.

⁷² Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the treasurer of Saint-Frambaud of Senlis, September 4, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 667; Primat, pp. 57–8.

5

The Peace of Tunis

THE END OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE

In the early summer of 1270, two Greek envoys went looking for Louis IX. John Bekkos, chartophylax of Hagia Sophia, and Constantine Meliteniotes, archdeacon of the clergy at the imperial court, left Constantinople and took the *Via Egnatia* overland to Valona (modern Vlorë, Albania) on the Adriatic. Fearful of arrest, they avoided Apulia, where Angevin control was firmer, and sailed directly to Sicily. They landed at Capo Passero on the southern tip of the island. It was only then that they learned that Louis had already left on his crusade and was camped on the other side of the Sicilian Straits. Unwilling to risk a long stay in Angevin territory, they set sail into a storm and arrived at Carthage in mid-August. Despite their fortuitous discovery of the king's whereabouts, they arrived too late to fulfill their mission. Louis was too ill to receive them and his death soon after saddened them, since they had hoped he could prevent his brother from invading Byzantium. When they realized that Charles was due in the camp at any moment, they fled as quickly as they could. The next day, two more sets of envoys arrived. They represented the other eastern partners in the coalition that Louis had tried to assemble against Baybars: King Hethum I of Armenia and the Mongol Ilkhan Abaqa. King Philippe III of France received them and placed one of his tents at their disposal. Amid the hardships of the crusader camp, they took their meals on silver plate. And yet, as Primat says, "at first, no one knew why they had come." Whatever plans Louis had made for coordinating with the Mamluks' regional rivals had disappeared with him.¹ The alliance he had forged to fight the battle for Syria had collapsed.

¹ Primat, p. 73; Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282: A Study in Byzantine–Latin Relations* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1959; repr. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), p. 226; Borghese, pp. 69, 250–4; Louis Bréhier, "Une ambassade byzantine au camp de Saint Louis devant Tunis,"

The crusade was now in the hands of the king of Sicily, who had been seeking a diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis for the past eighteen months. Baybars was his negotiating partner, not his enemy. The sultan, in any case, was thousands of miles away and the Bedouin contingents he had dispatched to Tunis would not be arriving any time soon. The battle for Syria had been transposed, not only into a different region, but seemingly into a different register. Like Charles, al-Mustansir tended to negotiate rather than fight across religious frontiers. After a difficult start, the two dynasts had been negotiating to resolve their differences. But the dynamic of their relationship was also about to change. It would no longer be a matter of Brother Berenger calmly discussing the rate of the import fee on Sicilian wheat with his Hafsids counterparts, as he had been doing just a few months before. Now, Charles and al-Mustansir were facing each other at the head of large, expensively assembled, and fractious armies. The temptation to use the military force at their disposal would be strong, and not only because it could help them gain a better bargaining position. On both sides, there was mounting pressure to activate the conflict. To keep their divided armies together, Charles and al-Mustansir might just have to use them. The negotiators were now in charge, but to get the settlement they wanted, they were going to have to fight for it first.

THE ANGEVIN EXPEDITION TO TUNIS

Charles's arrival in Carthage on August 25, 1270 was greeted with relief. The crusaders had been expecting him for weeks. Amaury of la Roche had told them on July 24 that he would be coming soon, and Olivier of Termes had reported on the 29th that he could be expected within the week.² Whether these representations were deliberately false, designed to keep the army from attacking the Hafsids, is hard to confirm. But they were certainly inaccurate. Charles had no chance of crossing over to Tunis by the end of July. Unlike Louis, he had not been preparing for the expedition for the past three years. A fresh examination of the Angevin registers suggests that it was only in mid- to late June 1270 that he committed himself to crusading in person in the Maghreb. Despite other pressing priorities, and a lack of money, ships, and sailors, he was able to mount a multistage naval expedition—from Naples to Palermo to Trapani to Tunis—in about eight weeks. For comparison, the first

Melanges offertes à M. Nicolas Iorga (Paris: J. Gamber, 1933), pp. 139–46; Paul Lemerle, "Saint Louis et Byzance," *Journal asiatique* 258 (1970): pp. 25–35.

² Sternfeld, pp. 239, 243.

mission to Achaia in early 1270 was organized in about the same amount of time. Although everyone thought he was late, Charles was actually right on time.

The first signs that Charles was coming to Tunis appear in orders issued in late June 1270. The master of the naval arsenal for two mainland provinces of the *Regno*—the Principato and the Terra di Lavoro—was instructed on June 22 to assign two galleys and four *teride* to the proto-notary of Amalfi. Powered by sails and oars, Charles's galleys were large fighting vessels whose crews alone numbered about 150 men, including officers, marines, and 108 rowers. The *teride* were specialized horse transports, each capable of holding thirty animals.³ The following day, Charles purchased enough flour to supply a month's worth of ship's biscuit for nine galleys and nine *teride*. This was more than what was required to transport him and his retinue from Naples to Palermo. With eighteen vessels, over 1,500 men, and 270 horses, this was not a shuttle service. It was a war fleet.⁴

Issuing orders for a squadron was one thing; paying for it was another. Only the week before, on June 14, Charles had told the cardinals that he could only offer half of the annual tribute he owed the papal curia due to the weight of his expenses. To pay for the ships, he instructed the *secreti* of the Principato, Terra di Lavoro, and the Abruzzo to contract loans. Lack of funds hampered the gathering of food supplies for the expedition as well. Pierre of Stampis, master of the king's kitchens, explained to the Angevin curia that the livestock he had gathered in Calabria could not be transported to Messina and Palermo because there was no money available for shipping.⁵

Ready or not, Charles sailed for Palermo around July 5, just a few days after Louis departed from Aigues-Mortes. The ships, sailors, and food for the crossing to North Africa were going to have to be assembled on the island, where Charles had never set foot and Angevin control was far from total. Almost three years after Conrad Capece had launched the Hohenstaufen insurrection, Charles's soldiers were still chasing him around the Sicilian interior. Regardless, by July 14 a fresh stream of orders was flowing from Palermo: for repairs to the royal *teride*; for 500 packloads

³ John Pryor, "The Galleys of Charles I of Anjou, king of Sicily ca. 1269–84," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 14 (1993): pp. 33–103; Juho Wilskman, "The Conflict between the Angevins and the Byzantines in Morea in 1267–1289: A Late Byzantine Endemic War," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 22 (2012): p. 41, fn. 24.

⁴ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 82, nos. 350–1 (Lefevre, no. 139); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 30, no. 138 (Lefevre, no. 140).

⁵ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 80, no. 346 (Lefevre, no. 131); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 30, no. 137 (Lefevre, no. 138); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 41, no. 184 (Lefevre, no. 155).

of wheat and 1,500 of barley to feed the king's soldiers and horses; then, two days later, "for the greatest possible quantity of flour and biscuit available" for the fleet.⁶ Money was still lacking. On the 17th, Charles wrote to the Pisans to complain that he had not received the 4,000 gold ounces they owed him as part of the settlement that allowed them to resume trading in the *Regno*.⁷

On July 18, the French and Genoese crusaders disembarked on the Halq al-Wadi. Two days later, Charles sent two royal ships from Naples to Trapani, from where they could open a line of communication with the crusade. It was presumably one of these boats that brought Amaury of la Roche to the camp outside Carthage with his message of procrastination. Until his expeditionary force was ready, Charles would have to try to control the crusade from a distance. With Louis in North Africa, there was no longer any reason to keep the destination a secret. On the 21st, the Angevin curia referred to Tunis for the first time in an instruction to the justiciars of the *Regno*. Merchants trading in the kingdom usually operated under a system of export control that provided the crown with significant revenue.⁸ To encourage them to supply the crusaders, Charles waived export fees on wheat, wine, barley, meat, weapons, horses, and wood. To trade under these terms, merchants had to post sureties with an Angevin port official, which they could only redeem by presenting a certificate from a marshal of the crusader army attesting that the provisions had in fact been sold to "the people of the host." Charles was happy to help his brother's crusade, but he was not going to be ripped off in the process.⁹

Charles soon confirmed the obvious. He informed the *secretus* of Calabria on July 27 that Louis had brought his Christian army to Tunis and taken Carthage by assault. Wishing to come to his brother's aid "by our powerful fleet," he commanded supplies from Calabria to be sent to Trapani without delay. The *secretus* replied that he could not provide what was requested—1,000 steers, 600 cows, 1,500 pigs, and 10,000(!) chickens—without harming the subjects under his care. The wheat needed for the ship's biscuit was not coming in fast enough either. Charles criticized the justiciar of Bari and the *secretus* of Apulia for failing to procure it. Finding crews for the ships was no easier. Men had to be

⁶ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 45, no. 199 (Lefevre, no. 164); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 45, no. 198 (Lefevre, no. 162); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 48–9, no. 215 (Lefevre, no. 165).

⁷ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 90, nos. 383–6 (Lefevre, n. 62, note 47).

⁸ *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 9–10, nos. 38–9 (Lefevre, no. 168); for Angevin control of the grain trade in Sicily, see Michel de Boüard, "Problèmes de subsistances dans un État médiéval: Le marché et les prix des céréales au royaume angevin de Sicile (1266–1282)," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* 54 (1938): pp. 493, 498.

⁹ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 46, no. 205 (Lefevre, no. 174).

compelled to serve on pain of having their homes and grapevines destroyed; even in the face of such compulsion, desertion rates were high. Money was still tight and Charles had to resort to expedients. He diverted 250 gold ounces from his daughter Isabelle's marriage dowry to cover his mounting expenses. In mid-August, as the Catalans were rustling cattle around Tunis, Charles had to borrow 2,000 *livres tournois* from an ailing Louis and 6,000 from Alphonse of Poitiers. Once borrowed, the money was redistributed to other crusaders in the camp, including the counts of Roussy and Luxembourg and the archdeacon of Chartres. Charles was piling debt on debt to launch his campaign.¹⁰

On August 18, Charles moved from Palermo to Trapani, where he issued his last orders before departure. He was worried about the security situation in Sicily in his absence. The lingering insurgency made the Tunis expedition a calculated risk. In the long run, appearing in force before al-Mustansir might secure the southern borders of the *Regno* and revive the commercial exchange across the Sicilian Straits that was crucial to its economy. In the short term, though, the remaining Sicilian dissidents might profit from Charles's absence.¹¹

THE FIRST BATTLE

Charles had earned a reputation as a field commander through his victories at Benevento and Tagliacozzo. After five weeks of inactivity in the face of Hafsid raids on their camp outside Carthage, many crusaders were ready to fight, if for no other reason than to defend themselves more actively. Taking the offensive also opened up the prospect of gaining spoils and consolidating the spiritual rewards that the expedition was meant to offer. There was anxiety in the army over whether the suffering they had endured was earning them the indulgence. The two men who had promised that going to North Africa would fulfill the crusade vow—Louis IX and the papal legate—could no longer reassure them on this score. By taking the fight to the infidel, the soldiers could affirm that they were worthy of the spiritual rewards of holy war. They looked to the “Sicilian lion” to lead them to victory.¹²

¹⁰ Lefevre, no. 178; *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 42, no. 186 (Lefevre, no. 190); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 18, nos. 97–8 (Lefevre, no. 198); Sternfeld, p. 339 (appendix A, no. 26); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 240–1, no. 141 (Lefevre, no. 201).

¹¹ *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 42, no. 188 (Lefevre, no. 204); *RCA*, vol. 5: p. 50, no. 219; Sternfeld, p. 254.

¹² For the nickname, see Primat, p. 74.

Eventually, it would become clear that Charles's ultimate aims diverged from those of the crusaders he had inherited from his brother. At first, however, their ambitions aligned. In order to maximize his leverage against al-Mustansir, Charles needed to pose a credible military threat. The crusaders, strengthened by fresh supplies and reinforced with troops, were eager to demonstrate their worth. Tapping into their hunger for plunder and fear for their vows, he exhorted them in the language of religious division and conflict: "Let's go now, by God, and we will attack all together with a good will against these enemies of the faith; and God the all powerful will assist us."¹³

Not only could Charles speak the language of war, he had a plan for how to fight one. Before he left Sicily, someone from the crusader camp seems to have tipped him off about the strategic importance of al-Bahira, the large but shallow lagoon that separated Tunis from the halq al-Wadi. The Hafsidids were transporting food to their camp, which lay some distance from the city, across the lagoon by boat. By taking control of the waterway, Charles could cut this supply line and outflank the Hafsid camp. With this in mind, Charles brought with him flat-bottomed barges that could intercept Tunisian vessels and shuttle crusaders across the lake.¹⁴

Toward the beginning of September 1270, Charles ordered his men to drag the barges across the halq al-Wadi onto al-Bahira. Recognizing the threat that this posed to his position, Yahya b. Salih al-Hintati, commander of the Hafsid forces, launched a strong attack to block this operation, bringing up troops on barges, with support from horsemen coming around from Hafsid headquarters. Up to this point, the Hafsid cavalry had limited themselves to harassing raids and feigned retreats. This time, they sustained their assault and did not withdraw. Here, finally, was a chance for the crusaders to engage. Armed with bows and lances, lightly armored, and riding fast small horses, the Hafsid cavalry had so far proved elusive, especially because, as Primat reported:

Our men are very heavily armed with hauberks and shields, and shoulder harnesses, and other armor. They [the French knights] cannot follow them [the Hafsid cavalry] for long, because the horses on which they are mounted are heavy from their own weight, and from the weight of their arms, such that they cannot move freely. If they cannot follow for long, they have to go back.¹⁵

With a chance to fight at hand, Charles called the French barons to battle. Philippe of Montfort and the count of Artois were the first to respond and were soon joined by many others. Fighting at close proximity with swords

¹³ Primat, p. 75.

¹⁴ Lefevre, no. 188; Sternfeld, p. 259.

¹⁵ Primat, p. 74.

and lances, they forced the Hafsid soldiers back toward the lake. Some tried to escape on the barges that had brought them to the battlefield, but they found to their horror that the sailors, panicked by the crusader advance, had already fled. Surrounded by the crusaders next to the lake, Hafsid soldiers died in large numbers by drowning or slaughter.

The Hafsid losses could have been greater. A dust storm pinned the crusaders back as they tried to advance on the Tunisian camp. Some Hafsid cavalry, more accustomed to the local conditions, were able to retreat through the storm on horseback. The crusaders did not escape unscathed from the battle either. The new marshal, Renaud of Pressigny, the admiral, Florent of Varennes, and several other French lords died, either in battle or by misadventure during the dust storm. The landscape was dotted with irrigation wells that claimed several unsuspecting victims. Although they had suffered heavy casualties in the battle, the crusaders claimed a victory for themselves. Pierre of Condé boasted in a letter home that the bodies of the "Saracen" dead covered the ground for half a league around.¹⁶

Charles rapidly consolidated crusader control over al-Bahira, launching his barges on the water and ordering more to be built. He also started construction of a wooden castle that would command the shore. The work involved was extensive, since Charles had in mind a two-story structure that required a lot of wood, which had to be gathered and sawn into boards.¹⁷ This elaborate building program had advantages beyond the tactical. It gave the crusaders something to do while Charles and al-Mustansir entered into back-channel negotiations to end the crusade.

NEGOTIATIONS

The emir was under pressure to reach a settlement. Ifriqiya had been suffering food shortages before the crusaders arrived. A two-month blockade of the port of Tunis, combined with a number of extra mouths to feed, had made matters worse. With the loss of tactical control over the lake,

¹⁶ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the treasurer of Saint-Frambaud of Senlis, September 4, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 667; Thibaut of Champagne, "Letter to Eudes of Chateauroux, cardinal-bishop of Tusculum, September 24, 1270," in Antoine-Jean Leronne, "Sur l'authenticité d'une lettre de Thibaud, roi de Navarre, relative à la mort de saint Louis," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 5 (1844): pp. 105–17; Primat, pp. 74–7; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367).

¹⁷ Primat, p. 77.

resupplying the campaign headquarters had become more challenging. Disease was rampant in the city. The crusaders heard rumors that al-Mustansir was hiding in an underground grotto to avoid the bad air that was blamed for the outbreak. Since Tunis was effectively under a trade embargo, the Hafsid treasury was starved of revenue even as it hosted the Bedouin tribesmen who had joined the jihad against the Franks. In any case, it was not clear how much longer they would be willing to stay involved. Summer was turning into autumn, when the Bedouin migrated to their southern pasturelands. Some believed they were losing interest in the fight. Al-Yunini reported that the Franks were paying them as much as 40,000 dinars a day to stay on the sidelines—a statement that may not be strictly accurate, but is at least indicative of the rifts that were emerging in al-Mustansir's fragile coalition.¹⁸ While losing the Bedouin would be unfortunate, letting the war drag on long enough for Baybars's reinforcements to arrive would be a disaster. Accepting help from the sultan would involve a loss of face. Every day that passed made it that much harder to keep the diverse Hafsid army together. The historian al-Khazandari tells a story that may reflect the emir's desperation to keep his soldiers engaged. Al-Mustansir is supposed to have promised them a dinar for each ear of a Frank they brought to him. The time to make peace had come.¹⁹

Rather than building on his military success, Charles was also ready to negotiate. As the work on the barges and the wooden castle went on, he requested a new shipment of supplies from the *Regno*, this time from the Terra di Lavoro, the province that lay north of Naples.²⁰ This was perhaps a sign that the provinces nearer to the conflict were running out of food for the crusader army. Money remained scarce as well. On September 9, Alphonse of Poitiers lent Charles another 8,000 *l.t.*²¹ Two days later, Charles appointed a procurator to collect the 4,000 gold ounces that the Pisans owed him.²² By the 24th, the loans he had taken out earlier were falling due. He wrote to the archdeacon of Palermo in some desperation: "Truly," he declared, "just as we have often on other occasions written to you, we are suffering a great lack of money at present."²³ The question for Charles was how to negotiate in light of his parlous finances. Should he accept whatever al-Mustansir offered in order to liquidate the campaign as

¹⁸ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 456.

¹⁹ Primat, p. 79; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367); al-Khazandari, pp. 152–3.

²⁰ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 10, no. 29 (Lefevre, no. 213).

²¹ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 20, no. 71 (Lefevre, no. 214).

²² *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 21, no. 76 (Lefevre, no. 216).

²³ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 28, no. 85 (Lefevre, no. 223).

soon as possible, which would stanch the flow of cash hemorrhaging from the Angevin treasury, or should he try to recoup his losses and perhaps even profit over the long haul, by holding out for more?

Charles opted to take the long view. With a large army at his disposal, he would never have a better chance to extract a settlement that would satisfy his financial and security demands. Despite this advantageous position, he negotiated with al-Mustansir for a month without result. Tunis was suffering, but the emir was not yet willing to accept peace on Charles's terms. He had declared a jihad against the Franks and many volunteers had responded to the call. He did not want to alienate them by abandoning the campaign too quickly. Within his inner circle of advisors, there were factions that favored pursuing the conflict. Federico of Castile and Federico Lancia were likely to face expulsion under the terms of any peace agreement with Charles.²⁴ For them, the crusade was the continuation of the war against the Angevins begun four years before. At the same time, the emir was receiving reports that all was not well within the crusader camp, despite the modest victory they had won. Many crusaders were ill, the death toll continued to mount, and some had taken to drink to deal with the boredom and fear of the long campaign.²⁵ Al-Mustansir knew how much it cost to keep an army in the field and was prepared to hold tight for a little longer as Charles explored the limits of his patience and treasury.

THE SECOND BATTLE

For the time being, Charles kept his negotiations with al-Mustansir secret.²⁶ In late September, Philippe III recovered from his illness and rejoined the crusader council. He faced conflicting pressures. On the one hand, demonstrating his worth on the battlefield could help him gain legitimacy as a ruler in the eyes of the barons, knights, and ordinary soldiers. On the other hand, he had just become the king of a realm that was thousands of miles away. The men in charge of it were a secular lord of modest rank and an abbot—their authority derived more from the privileged relationships they had enjoyed with the late king than their own status. Under the circumstances, it would be tempting to return home as soon as possible. For Philippe III, however, the chance to win prestige by confronting the infidel was irresistible. He agreed to Charles's proposal of

²⁴ Sternfeld, p. 262.

²⁵ Al-Khazandari, p. 152.

²⁶ Pierre of Conde, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: pp. 667–8.

an all-out attack on the Hafsid camp. For a second time, Charles would marshal the aggression of his French kinsmen to improve his negotiating position.

On October 2, 1270, the army of France went out in full battle array. The footsoldiers, archers, and crossbowmen took up the most advanced position, followed by the knights grouped into "battles" according to affiliations of family, lordship, and region. Pierre, count of Alençon, along with a contingent of Hospitaller knights, remained behind to guard the crusader camp. Horns sounded, the oriflamme was raised aloft, and the army advanced in good order toward the Hafsid soldiers who had come out to see what was going on.

Faced with the massed ranks of the crusaders, the Hafsids reverted to their traditional tactic of *al-karr wa-l-farr*, advance and withdrawal. If they could lure the crusaders into a headlong charge, the tightly formed Frankish "battles" would break up and the smaller groups of cavalry could be rounded on, isolated, and attacked. Since the crusaders had seen this tactic several times already, the Hafsids left behind plunder to encourage their adversaries to break formation to collect it. Charles was also familiar with *al-karr wa-l-farr*: he had used it against Conradin at the battle of Tagliacozzo two years earlier. The shout went down the lines to hold formation and maintain the advance toward the Hafsid camp.

The Tunisians now faced a hard choice. They could defend the camp, which was packed with wood, military hardware, food, and many sick and wounded men. The risk was that they might take heavy casualties fighting in close quarters against the heavy French cavalry, supported by crossbow fire. If they lost their army trying to save the camp, only the walls of Tunis would remain to protect the city, while the suburbs would be exposed to conquest. To preserve the soldiers who were still fit enough to fight, Yahya b. Salih al-Hintati withdrew them beyond the camp, ceding it to the crusaders.

Charles and Philippe III now had a decision of their own to make. If they pursued the Hafsid army past the camp, they might be able to pin it down and destroy it, clearing the way for the conquest of Tunis. But continuing the pursuit was fraught with risks. They did not know the terrain and feared it might be like the land around the Carthage camp, which was dotted with dangerous wells, caves, and hiding places where the enemy could wait in ambush. Then there was the question of whether the knights and footsoldiers would follow them past the camp, which they wanted to sack. The crusade had not enriched anybody yet. Carthage had been a disappointment in this regard, yielding some barley and nothing else. The Hafsid camp might finally offer up some of Tunis's fabled wealth.²⁷

²⁷ Primat, pp. 77–9; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367); Charles of Anjou, "Letter to Pierre of Montbrun, October 4, 1270," in Léopold Delisle,

Beyond these tactical issues lay a larger strategic reality: Charles did not want to conquer Tunis. Whatever the motivations of Philippe III and his barons, Charles remained committed to settling with al-Mustansir. In a letter to Mathieu of Vendôme, abbot of Saint-Denis and co-regent of France, Pierre of Condé described Charles's approach to the campaign as a continuation of his previous negotiations with the emir:

The king of Sicily had asked our barons at the beginning of the war, that they should not threaten the king of Tunis until they had received his [Charles's] message. I believe this was because there were discussions about peace between [al-Mustansir] and [Charles] and about the tribute that should be collected again from the king of Tunis. . . . These talks had been suspended for some time, and our army invaded the kingdom of Tunis. Once Charles had joined our army, and found his brother dead, he decided that he would acquire by violence what he had previously sought after through negotiations.²⁸

By allowing the crusaders their plunder, Charles could preserve the larger prize of Tunis, its trade with Sicily, and its tribute money for himself.

Releasing weeks of frustration, the French knights and footsoldiers tore into the Hafsid camp. They removed everything edible they could find, including flour, cows, and sheep, pulled down the tents and pavilions, and killed the sick where they lay. Once everything valuable had been taken away, they gathered together the fabric, tent poles, and wood, set the corpses of the sick Hafsid soldiers they had killed on top of the pile, and set the whole thing on fire. Then they marched back to their own camp near Carthage. The Tunisians were outraged by the slaughter of their sick companions and offended that their corpses had been cremated in violation of Islamic norms.²⁹

THE TREATY OF TUNIS

Charles announced the victory of October 2, 1270 in a triumphant letter to Pierre of Montbrun, chamberlain of the Holy See. He celebrated how the crusaders had "put to fire and ruin" the Tunisian headquarters and declared that "we and our nephew [i.e. Philippe III], together with the whole Christian army, intend to besiege the city of Tunis and its Saracens,

Instructions adressées par le comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques aux correspondants du ministère de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts. Littérature latine et histoire du moyen âge (Paris: Leroux, 1890), pp. 73–7.

²⁸ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270."

²⁹ Primat, pp. 78–9; Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367).

hoping in God, for whose praise this affair was begun, that an end very much to be wished for will be accomplished for these same Saracens.”³⁰ The last clause was a marvel of careful exposition, which implied but did not directly state that the victory would allow Charles to destroy Tunis. In fact, the battle of October 2 marked a different kind of turning point for the crusade. On both sides, the focus turned to ending the conflict.

For al-Mustansir, the situation had become dangerous. Al-Khazandari reported that the Muslims would have surrendered the country to “al-Francis” (Louis IX) if God had not had other plans.³¹ The emir retained the better part of his army, but had sustained heavy losses of men, equipment, and supplies. He considered withdrawing inland to al-Qarawayn, but then thought better of it and ordered a trench to be dug around his headquarters so it would be harder to infiltrate the next time. In a self-conscious display of unity, his advisor Abu Said grabbed a shovel and dug alongside the workers.³² In the meantime, al-Mustansir sent Abu Zayyan Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Qawi, emir of the Banu Tujin, to start a fresh round of negotiations. Charles was ready to talk. The autumn sailing season, which sometimes brought terrible storms, was approaching. So too was Prince Edward of England, who had departed from Aigues-Mortes and would expect to share in the proceeds of any settlement. Reaching an agreement quickly would gain Charles more money and a safer passage home.

The basic contours of a settlement were plain to see: al-Mustansir would pay an indemnity to the crusaders to secure their withdrawal. Charles and al-Mustansir, however, wanted something more than that. Over several weeks in October 1270, they crafted a treaty that wound down the crusade and settled the whole array of issues that had troubled their relationship since the Angevin invasion of Sicily in 1266. Their commitment to a lasting peace is reflected in the length of the truce they eventually signed: fifteen solar years.

The peace was finalized on October 30, 1270. On November 5, al-Mustansir swore to observe the provisions of the treaty in the presence of Godfrey of Beaumont, chancellor of Sicily.³³ The main signatories were

³⁰ Charles of Anjou, “Letter to Pierre of Montbrun, October 4, 1270.”

³¹ Al-Khazandari, p. 151.

³² Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 670 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 367).

³³ The standard edition of the text, with an accompanying French translation, is de Sacy, pp. 448–77; de Sacy’s French translation is reprinted in *Traité*s, pp. 93–6. Pierre Garrigou-Grandchamp produced a revised edition in 1912, which Mohammed Talbi corrected when he reissued the article in which Garrigou-Grandchamp’s version originally appeared: see “Documents divers,” pp. 245–82. For the date of the treaty, see de Sacy, pp. 473–6; *Traité*s, pp. 137–40 (in his historical introduction); Sternfeld, pp. 368–72; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 62, fn. 1. I follow Brunschvig’s chronology.

al-Mustansir, Charles, Philippe III, and Thibaut of Navarre. The French barons and knights, including specifically Baudouin of Constantinople, Alphonse of Poitiers, Guy of Flanders, and Henri of Luxembourg, were also committed to observe the agreement, as was Prince Edward of England, although he had not yet arrived. The terms were recorded in Arabic and a European language, possibly Old French. Only the Arabic version has survived. The text shows the influence of Old French usages, transliterating *comte* (“kamt”) rather than *comes* and calling Charles of Anjou “Jarl” rather than Carolus (as in Latin) or “Sharun,” the name he is called in Arabic historical sources. These formulations are suggestive, but they do not preclude the possibility that a Latin version was redacted as well.³⁴ Two European sources (Pierre of Condé and Primat) had access to the treaty and offer versions of its main provisions that agree with those given in the Arabic version, while providing additional detail on points of concern to the crusaders.³⁵ These variations are a standard feature of medieval Mediterranean interreligious treaty making: each party to an agreement would present the terms in as palatable a form as possible to its domestic audience.

Personal Security, Merchant Privileges, and Shipwreck

The foundation of economic exchange between Hafsid Ifriqiya and the northern Mediterranean was safe and secure movement for travelers between and within the two regions. This principle was enshrined in treaties that al-Mustansir had signed with Genoa, Venice, and Pisa in the 1250s and 1260s and that Abu Zakariya had signed with the Hohenstaufen a generation before. The Angevin–Hafsid proxy war from 1266 onward had disrupted trade between Sicily and Ifriqiya as well as central Mediterranean commercial exchange more generally, since Italian, Provençal, and Iberian merchants had also suffered from increased piracy in the Sicilian Straits and the unrest in Sicily during the insurgency. To restore calm to the markets, the Treaty of Tunis called for all Muslim travelers to be under God’s protection in the lands of the signatory Christian kings, who engaged themselves to suppress piracy emanating from their shores. If Muslim visitors suffered injuries to their persons or goods, the kings were liable for reparations.

³⁴ De Sacy, pp. 472–3.

³⁵ Pierre of Condé, “Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270”; Primat, p. 81.

The treaty afforded the same protection to subjects of the kings trading in Hafsid territory, as well as to their Christian allies. The emir would safeguard their sales, purchases, and travel within his domains. They would trade according to their accustomed usages, and property that had been confiscated during the hostilities would be returned. To further restore confidence in the Ifriqiyan commercial economy, Christian and Muslim ships were declared off-limits to attack when anchored in a Hafsid port.³⁶

Other provisions of the treaty dealt with shipwreck. In many medieval European kingdoms, the *Regno* included, the crown would claim whatever washed ashore from a shipwreck. The signatory princes agreed not to enforce this custom on Muslim ships that broke up in their ports, or even on Christian ships with a Muslim aboard. Muslim people and property thrown on to their shores were to be safeguarded and returned.³⁷

Enemies and Exile

Al-Mustansir had antagonized Charles by sheltering Hohenstaufen exiles from the *Regno*. Political refugees flowed from Ifriqiya to the northern Mediterranean as well. In 1236, Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen had received a nephew of Abu Zakariya named 'Abd al-'Aziz, who had fled Tunis claiming he wanted to be baptized by Pope Gregory IX.³⁸ Over papal objections, Frederick refused to surrender the young man, or alternately the young man refused to forgo imperial protection. In the end, 'Abd al-'Aziz did not convert and spent his life serving in the emperor's Muslim guard. The Treaty of Tunis attempted to curtail this traffic in exiles by forbidding all parties from sheltering the enemies of the others. The Christian kings could not receive the emir's enemies in their domains or provide aid to anyone trying to harm Hafsid towns or subjects. By the same token, "Every enemy person of the said kings shall be obliged to leave the lands of the commander of the believers, and can never be received there again."³⁹ In his version of the treaty, Primat identified Federico of Castile and Federico Lancia as particular targets of this provision.⁴⁰ At least formally, al-Mustansir was renouncing his support for the Hohenstaufen insurgency. The broad language of the provision in the Arabic version of the treaty also left open the possibility that the emir might be barred from allying with other enemies of the Christian kings.

³⁶ "Documents divers," pp. 259–60, 262–3.

³⁷ "Documents divers," pp. 260, 263.

³⁸ *Epistolae selectae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Karl Rodenberg, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883–94), nos. 694, 700; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 465.

³⁹ "Documents divers," pp. 260–1, 264, 266.

⁴⁰ Primat, p. 81.

A few years after the crusade, for example, when Charles was at war with the Genoese, he would insist on the basis of this “enemies” clause that al-Mustansir could not trade with them.⁴¹

Christianity in Ifriqiya

The Latin Christian communities of Hafsid Ifriqiya—merchants, mercenaries, and captives—were free to practice their faith in chapels built for their use and with clergy imported from Europe. Like other Christian minorities in the *dar al-Islam*, they could not proselytize publicly or seek to convert Muslims in other ways. The Treaty of Tunis affirmed these traditional rights in a carefully crafted provision:

The monks of the Christians or their priests may be in the lands of the emir of the believers and he gives them a place where they can build their residences and houses of prayer, and places for burying their dead. The said monks and the priests may preach and pray in a loud voice [*mijharan*] in their churches [*fi kanaisihum*], and they may serve God according to what is accustomed in their practice and what they are used to in their countries.⁴²

If we numbered the clauses of the truce, this would be the sixth. Pierre of Condé placed it second in his version of the treaty and summarized it correctly. Primat moved it into first place and offered a more expansive rendition:

And it was arranged in the following fashion between our men and the king of Tunis. And first that in all the cities and noble places of the kingdom of Tunis, and in all the lands subject to the kingdom and those that would be subject to it, from now on, priests and religious would have churches and buildings and cemeteries, and would inhabit these places solemnly and in peace, and would ring their bells and would celebrate the divine service, and would perform in common the office of preaching, and would perform and administer the sacraments of the church to Christians who would live there.⁴³

Primat’s account was technically accurate, but gave the impression of a broader Christian presence in Ifriqiya than the Arabic treaty did. “A place [*sakan*]” has turned into “all the cities and noble places of the kingdom.” Other European chroniclers would exaggerate the crusade’s accomplishments in the realm of Christianization even further. In his universal

⁴¹ RCA, vol. 10: p. 21, no. 78 (Lefevre, no. 389).

⁴² “Documents divers,” pp. 260, 264. Note that *kanais* (churches) is spelled with “ya” here, not “hamza,” as it is in Modern Standard Arabic: *kanaʾis*.

⁴³ Primat, p. 81.

history, the French dynastic chronicler Guillaume of Nangis explained that the Muslims had:

entered into agreements with the Christians. Among which were said to be these especially . . . that in monasteries built in honor of Christ's name in all the cities of that kingdom the faith of Christ was to be freely preached by brothers minor [Franciscans] and preacher [Dominicans] and by whosoever else wished to do so, and those wishing to be baptized were to be baptized freely.⁴⁴

The claim that Christian missionaries could freely baptize Muslims in post-crusade Ifriqiya was false. But it fed into a growing sense among some commentators on the expedition that its primary aim had been to re-Christianize North Africa.⁴⁵ The authentic treaty provision was more limited in scope and traditional in intent, but it broke new ground in one important respect. It affirmed the rights to residence and worship that the Christian communities of Hafsīd Ifriqiya had long enjoyed in practice but that had never before been explicitly confirmed in a treaty.⁴⁶

Withdrawal and Indemnity

In return for their departure, the emir agreed to pay the crusaders 210,000 gold ounces, each worth 50 *sous tournois*, giving the payment a total value of 525,000 *l.t.* in French currency.⁴⁷ This was a lot of money. It was more than the 400,000 *l.t.* Louis had paid to free his army from captivity in 1250, although he had also surrendered Damietta to secure his own release.⁴⁸ The Hafsīd indemnity can also be compared to the annual income of the French crown, which was estimated at the time of Louis's first crusade to be 250,000 *l.t.*, or less than half what al-Mustansir paid the crusaders to leave.⁴⁹ Half of the total would be handed over immediately, with the balance paid out in two equal installments over the following two years. Charles would receive one-third, or 70,000 gold ounces, as would Philippe III, with the remainder distributed among the leading French

⁴⁴ Guillaume of Nangis, *Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis*, ed. Hercule Géraud, 2 vols (Paris: J. Renouard, 1843), vol. 1: p. 238.

⁴⁵ Guillaume's universal Latin history is one of at least eight chronicles to claim that the Tunis Crusade opened up North Africa to Christian missionizing; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 168–9.

⁴⁶ *Traité*s, p. 139 (historical introduction).

⁴⁷ "Documents divers," pp. 261, 265. For the calculations, see Strayer, vol. 2: pp. 516–17.

⁴⁸ Joinville, p. 346 (Smith, p. 230).

⁴⁹ *RHGF*, vol. 21: pp. 513–15; William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 78–9.

barons, including Thibaut of Navarre.⁵⁰ Given his late arrival, Charles had done well to claim a third of the spoils from the crusade.

The Tribute

The final provision of the treaty is also the best known:

It is added to the present covenant that there will be paid [*yuwada*] to the illustrious Charles, by the grace of God king of Sicily, for the past five years, ending at the date of the present letter, that which was ordinarily paid to the emperor. It will be equally paid to the said illustrious king, counting from this day and in advance, each year, double what was paid to the emperor.⁵¹

The choice of the verb *wada* is notable. It was traditionally used to describe blood money: the payment made to a kin group to stop it from taking revenge for the injury or death of one of its members. The implication here is that al-Mustansir was buying peace from Charles. What may once have been a wheat import fee had become a definitive tribute: a fixed annual payment that seemed to promise political subordination in return for peace.

Pierre of Condé provided the amounts involved, which the Arabic text did not disclose: al-Mustansir would pay five years of arrears at the original rate of 12,000 gold ounces, with the rate doubling to 24,000 gold ounces for the future annual payments. The emir was thus liable for an immediate lump-sum payment of 60,000 gold ounces. After months of haggling and a crusade, a compromise had emerged. Charles had given up his demand of back payments “from the time of Manfred and Frederick” in return for two concessions from al-Mustansir: (1) adding two more years of arrears to his original offer of three (i.e. agreeing to back payments from 1265 rather than 1267); and (2) doubling the rate for the next fifteen years. This was good business for both parties. Although the political implications were troubling, al-Mustansir had secured peace with a powerful neighbor and regained access to the Sicilian wheat market for a reasonable price under the circumstances. The benefits to Charles were similar: a stabilized southern frontier, an export market for his prized commodity, and a small but steady stream of money for a cash-strapped Angevin administration.⁵²

⁵⁰ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 43, no. 151 (Lefevre, no. 264); *RCA*, vol. 6, p. 374, no. 1885 (Lefevre, no. 297).

⁵¹ “Documents divers,” pp. 261–2, 266.

⁵² Pierre of Condé, “Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270.”

RESPONSES TO THE TREATY

The public announcement of the truce laid bare the divisions in the crusade army that Charles's initial burst of military activity had papered over. In the council of leading magnates, there were some who wanted to accept the truce under certain conditions, while others, according to Primat, "believed that they should kill as many Saracens as they could find and that the said city of Tunis should be destroyed along with the entire country, and then they should leave everything thus destroyed." While Thibaut of Navarre immediately embraced the treaty Charles had negotiated, Philippe III took longer to convince. In the end, though, the king gave way. His wife was pregnant, his counselors were telling him that the Tunisian climate was a health risk, his expenses were mounting, and he doubted that conquering Tunis would help the crusader states of Syria. Even if the attack succeeded, he would have to occupy the city with a substantial garrison, which would leave the expedition shorthanded for the next stage of the campaign. Always susceptible to his uncle's influence, he agreed to sign the truce.⁵³

The council's eventual decision to accept the agreement led to wider unrest, as the "common knighthood and community of people" pressed for an attack on Tunis that would allow them to "carry out vengeance against the enemies of the Christian faith" and capture "the spoils of the enemy."⁵⁴ The disappointment in Charles among the non-noble crusaders was palpable. Having called on them to risk their lives in two encounters with the Hafsids, he was accused of exploiting their willingness to fight for his own selfish ends. The "common people," reported Guillaume of Nangis, accused Charles of arranging the truce only in order to return the tribute.⁵⁵

On one level, this was a dispute over money. By sparing Tunis the sack and providing an indemnity to the leaders, the truce funneled the profits of the crusade to them and denied ordinary crusaders any share. On another level, though, the debate was over the role of crusading in Mediterranean interreligious relations. The opponents of the treaty were careful to couch their argument for sacking the city in the vocabulary of all-out religious war. So was the purpose of the crusade to destroy an intractable enemy or provide leverage for a negotiated settlement? Were the Muslims strategic partners whose survival could prove lucrative in the

⁵³ Primat, p. 80; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270."

⁵⁴ Primat, p. 80. ⁵⁵ *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 478.

long run or a religious Other that had to be eliminated? Both positions had partisans on the European side of the Tunis Crusade.

Just as Charles of Anjou's peace negotiations proved controversial in the crusader camp, al-Mustansir's pragmatic approach to saving his city elicited a range of responses among his subjects. Like Charles, the emir had pursued a diplomatic resolution to the conflict after beginning his campaign with a call to holy war. Not everyone was happy with the change in approach. It may be significant that the tribal chief Ibn 'Abd al-Qawi, who was somewhat of an outsider, handled the final negotiations, rather than one of the great Almohad shaykhs of Tunis. This could suggest that there was some resistance to the settlement among the Almohads, which would be ironic in light of the criticism they received during the campaign for their lethargic approach to the jihad.⁵⁶ There was also some disapproval in the pious circles where the holy war had been promoted. The religious Ibn 'Ajlan refused a request to sign the treaty as a witness.⁵⁷

Overall, though, al-Mustansir received little criticism for paying the crusaders to go away. He encountered no resistance when he asked his subjects to pay a special tax to fund the indemnity, which was said to be ten mule-loads of silver. Ibn Khaldun reported that, "The people eagerly reimbursed him this sum."⁵⁸ Moreover, opposition to the treaty among the *ulama* was far from universal. Two important Maliki jurists witnessed the Treaty of Tunis: Ibn Abi al-Dunya, who founded a law school in Tripoli, which he called al-Mustansiriyya to honor the emir; and Ibn Zaytun, who revived the Maliki *madhab* (school of jurisprudence) in Tunis in the mid-thirteenth century.⁵⁹ There was a range of views within Islamic jurisprudence on the permissibility of paying tribute to Christians and few jurists forbade the practice outright. Instead, most were concerned to identify the precise conditions under which a tribute could be paid without reproach. The Tunisian response to the truce with the crusaders—general approval combined with isolated opposition—fitted comfortably within this jurisprudential tradition, which gave al-Mustansir the latitude he needed to act pragmatically to defend his people.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Al-Khazandari, pp. 151–2; al-Yunini, vol. 2: p. 456.

⁵⁷ Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 63, fn. 2.

⁵⁸ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 671 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 368–9).

⁵⁹ Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 63, fn. 2; vol. 2: p. 291.

⁶⁰ Michael Lower, "Tribute, Islamic Law, and Diplomacy: The Legal Background to the Tunis Crusade of 1270," in *The Papacy, Religious Life, and Crusade in the Early Thirteenth Century*, ed. Jessalynn Bird (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, forthcoming).

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE AND
THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

Conflict across religious frontiers was a powerful cultural expectation in the Mediterranean environment in which al-Mustansir and Charles of Anjou operated. Both dynasts used this expectation to mobilize support when they first confronted each other in North Africa. The unusual circumstances in which they found themselves—two rulers accustomed to interreligious negotiation facing each other with large and anxious armies—meant that the lasting and durable settlement they sought would be difficult to achieve without some degree of initial confrontation. As the campaign progressed, both turned to approaches that did not conform as neatly to contemporary norms of Muslim-Christian conflict. Charles negotiated a financial settlement behind the backs of his fellow crusaders, while al-Mustansir used Christian mercenaries to wage his jihad and agreed to become a Sicilian tributary to end the crusade.

As the mixed response to the Treaty of Tunis shows, some felt betrayed by the turn to negotiation and accused the dynasts of manipulating a holy war for worldly ends. Their frustration is not surprising. Crusaders had risked their lives for what they had been told was a sacred cause, only to be denied any spiritual or financial compensation for their sacrifice. Without a pope to decide, no one could say whether the Tunis Crusade would count as an indulgence-worthy expedition. Charles and the other leaders had taken the Hafsids' money and would not be sharing it out. On the other side, jihad warriors had been called away from the fight and made to pay for a peace they may not have wanted.

But these expressions of betrayal should not obscure the more nuanced dynamic that played out over the final phase of the expedition. Preaching holy war against each other did not prevent al-Mustansir and Charles from making a deal; it made the deal possible. The initial appeal to ideologies of interreligious conflict proved essential to the final achievement of the settlement. On the Tunis Crusade, powerful affirmations of difference served as the handmaidens to peace.

Mutual acknowledgement of difference was a touchstone of the Treaty of Tunis. The agreement envisioned a system of interreligious relations based on distinct religious groups enjoying reciprocal rights and responsibilities. Muslims traveling in Christendom had a right to security and safety that was granted to them *as Muslims*, not as merchants, diplomats, or subjects of a particular ruler. The same criteria determined the rules on shipwrecks: vessels carrying Tunisians that wrecked in northern Mediterranean waters could not be claimed by Christian kings because, and only

because, the people on board were *Muslims*. The clause that regulated Christian worship in Hafsid Ifriqiya applied to all Christians who wanted to live there, whether they were Genoese, Venetians, Pisans, Catalans, Provençals, or Sicilians.

Not every provision of the treaty was structured around religious identification. As an agreement among four signatories—al-Mustansir, Charles, Philippe III, and Thibaut of Navarre—the treaty reflected their interests. The “enemies” clauses, for example, were strictly political. But in this sphere, too, the treaty imagined difference as a stabilizing force. By recognizing the distinct ambitions and right to existence of each state, the agreement formalized peaceful relations between Hafsid Ifriqiya and the kingdoms of Navarre, Sicily, and France. It was an unexpected result for a crusade meant to confront Mamluk Egypt. By the time the crusaders were ready to leave, a new diplomatic and commercial network had taken shape, which spanned the central and western Mediterranean and reached as far north as the Île de France. Louis IX’s last crusade had aimed to destroy difference, either by making the Muslims into Christians through conversion or by eliminating them altogether. Instead, his campaign ended in a treaty that turned difference into a path to peace. For the next fifteen years, a non-aggression pact would bind the “most Christian” kings of Capetian France to the Hafsid “caliphs” of Tunis.

6

Why Tunis?

There are few remaining mysteries in the history of the crusades, but the diversion of the Tunis Crusade is definitely one of them. Secrecy and death joined forces to make it so. In the run-up to the expedition, Louis and Charles maintained strict confidentiality about their plans. Louis took those plans with him to the tomb, while Charles, if he ever did reflect on the strange events of the summer of 1270, kept his thoughts to himself. There is no smoking gun for the Tunis Crusade, no deathbed confession from the last of the famous crusader kings, no candid conversation overheard at his brother's table by a nosy monk and recorded for posterity. It is important to respect the mystery at the heart of this crusade. As historians looking back on events of hundreds of years ago, sifting reticent sources for clues, we cannot access the innermost thoughts of the main actors. We can only reconstruct the historical environment that made Tunis appear to them a plausible first target for a Holy Land crusade.

In the absence of definitive testimony from the principals, two main theories emerged to explain the Tunisian landing. One came from the chronicler Saba Malaspina, a churchman who was probably based in the Calabrian town of Mileto at the time of the Tunis Crusade. Saba believed that Charles had inspired the diversion for financial reasons:

For the king of Tunis, on account of the recent rebellion of Sicily, which had been suppressed with many deaths, was refusing (having withheld it from King Charles for three years) to pay a certain annual rent or tax, which he was supposed to pay annually to the king of Sicily, so that foodstuffs might be brought freely into Tunis and Arabs might be able to cross the Sicilian Sea securely when they wanted and the Berbers might not be vexed by Sicilian pirate attacks. And for this reason, wishing to go to that country and desirous of driving by the force of others the serpent from his cave [i.e. al-Mustansir], Charles had acted adroitly to lead such an important army against Tunis.¹

Saba belonged to a Roman family with a strong tradition of support for the papal cause. He would enjoy a long career as canon and dean of the

¹ Saba Malaspina, pp. 228–9.

cathedral chapter of Mileto, as an official of the papal curia, and finally as bishop of Mileto. His links to the Guelf cause meant that he was well positioned to comment on Charles's diplomatic and military aims in the spring of 1270. Saba, however, did not write his account of the crusade until the early to mid-1280s, when the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers (1282) was threatening to topple Angevin rule. By then, Saba had become disillusioned with Charles's leadership over the Guelfs, and his frustrations are reflected in his history.² Saba saw the Tunis Crusade as another example of Charles's willingness to exploit others for his own financial gain.

If the Tunis Crusade was about money for Saba, for Geoffrey of Beaulieu it was about souls. As Louis's trusted confessor, Geoffrey developed the other major explanation for the diversion, which was as pious as Saba's was profane:

It must not be passed over in silence that in the same year, when the pious king had to cross the sea for the last time, the king of Tunis sent to him solemn ambassadors, and on the feast of Saint-Denis, the king had solemnly baptized a certain famous Jew in the church of that same Saint-Denis. As the king with many magnates raised him from the sacred font, he wished that the ambassadors of the king of Tunis might solemnly take part in the baptismal ceremony. After they were brought over, the king said with great emotion, "Say on my part to your lord the king, that I so strongly desire the health of his soul, that I would wish to be a captive of the Saracens for all the days of my life, I would wish never to see the light of the sun again, so long as your king and his people from their true hearts became Christians."³

This description of the crusade as a missionary venture appeared in Geoffrey's *Vita Ludovici noni*, which Pope Gregory X commissioned him to write for Louis's canonization procedure and which he completed sometime between his return to France in 1271 and the pope's death in 1274. Probably a native of northern France, Geoffrey joined the Dominican Order in 1248 and two years later was serving as Louis's confessor on the Egyptian crusade. He was, in fact, the first long-term appointee to the role that we know of, and he would continue in it for some twenty years, until he heard the king's final confessions in Carthage.⁴

² Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship, and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 70.

³ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 117) (slightly altered).

⁴ Natalis de Wailly, "Examen critique de la vie de Saint Louis par Geoffroy de Beaulieu," *Mémoires de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 15 (1845): pp. 403–36; Auguste Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France: Des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)*, 6 vols (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1901–6), vol. 3: p. 116; Thomas Kaeppeli, *Scriptores Ordinis*

Geoffrey's intimacy with Louis is both his greatest strength and greatest weakness as a source. On the one hand, he knew Louis as well as anyone and was present for all the big moments of the crusade: the meeting with the Tunisian ambassadors, the departure ceremonies at Saint-Denis, the halt on Cagliari, the occupation of Carthage, the death of Jean Tristan, and Louis's last painful days outside Tunis. He is the best witness we have to the king's aims. On the other hand, his closeness to the king made him unapologetically partial. The *vita* is an argument for sainthood from a man who loved the king very much. His account of the Tunis Crusade is fundamentally defensive, because the decision to crusade there was criticized after Louis's death. "We believe," he wrote, "that it would be expedient to assign the reasons that the lord king gave at the time concerning this, on account of the murmurs of the multitude, who would have preferred it if he had gone to the aid of the Holy Land by the most direct route."⁵ Among the critics was Pope Gregory X, whose election in September 1271 ended the long papal interregnum. Gregory did not believe the crusaders had fulfilled their vows by attacking Tunis. Geoffrey was therefore at pains to insist that the expedition had been launched with the most indulgence-worthy intentions: converting the emir and Christianizing North Africa.

Saba Malaspina and Geoffrey of Beaulieu offered opposing visions of the Tunis Crusade. Their explanations for the diversion were mono-causal (money or souls), exclusive (either Charles or Louis, but no one else, was responsible), and totalizing (no other motives or actors were considered). As a result, they left modern scholars with a stark choice. The crusade was either an act of sinful duplicity or one of pious simplicity; an attempt at accommodation or a campaign of elimination; a tribute grab or a missionary venture. It could not be both, and it could not be more.

Modern scholarship has pushed against these limitations to a certain degree. Important research on the Mongols, the Genoese, the Mamluks, and the Hafsiids has opened up new perspectives on an old controversy. But the basic framework set out by Saba and Geoffrey many centuries ago remains in place. Faced with the mutually exclusive interpretations of the two most important medieval analysts of the crusade, most historians have felt compelled to pick a side.

In the nineteenth century, Saba's version of the crusade was the popular choice. As a "Frenchman" who executed a "German" prince to seize power over an "Italian" kingdom, Charles was an easy target for the emerging

Praedicatorum medii aevi, 4 vols (Rome: Ad S. Sabinae, 1970–93), vol. 2: p. 15; Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), pp. 333–5; *Sanctity of Louis IX*, pp. 19–20.

⁵ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 116).

national schools of historiography. In an era of balance-of-power diplomacy and colonial engagement with the Maghreb, many French historians thought Louis was naive for trying to convert an emir. They preferred to believe that Charles had led him to North Africa under false pretenses. Henri Wallon's verdict in his 1876 biography of Louis was typical. Geoffrey of Beaulieu's arguments were chimeras; the only reality that mattered was that al-Mustansir had stopped paying tribute to Sicily. German historians were disgusted with Charles for a different reason: the execution of Conradin. Sicilian patriots such as Michele Amari despised him nearly as much for bringing foreign rule to the island. Amari celebrated the Vespers Revolt of 1282 as a blow for freedom and self-determination. By the end of the century, Charles was firmly established as the villain of the piece.⁶

The task of toppling this conventional wisdom fell to Richard Sternfeld, a young German historian who had begun his career with a study of Charles's rule as count of Provence. One by one, Sternfeld undermined the assumptions supporting the argument that Charles had diverted the crusade. In the first place, Sternfeld maintained, Charles had no reason to turn against Tunis. His policy touchstone was "war with Greece, friendly relations with Africa." The North African campaign was a distraction from his real aim, which was to conquer Byzantium. Second, Louis was no one's dupe. Formidable, admired throughout Christendom, and still in command of his faculties, the French king was very much in charge of his final campaign. Third, Charles only found out about the diversion after the fact. That is why he did not mention the Tunis landing in his correspondence until July 21, 1270, three days after it had taken place. What could be interpreted as reticence on Charles's part—a tactical silence—was actually ignorance. It was Louis, in his pursuit of a pure crusade ideal, who drove the crusade to Tunis.⁷

Although Sternfeld's analysis was in the hardheaded tradition of empirical history pioneered by Leopold von Ranke, it captured the imaginations of postwar crusades historians who wanted to take the religious motivations of medieval people more seriously. Étienne Delaruelle discerned a profound change in Louis's character after the Egyptian crusade. The

⁶ Henri Wallon, *Saint Louis et son temps*, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1875), vol. 2: pp. 518–19; Karl Hampe, *Geschichte Konradins von Hohenstaufen* (Leipzig: Koehler Verlag, 1940; original edition 1894), pp. 305–27; Michele Amari, *La guerra del Vespro Siciliano* (n.p., 1947), p. 41, originally published as *Un periodo delle istorie siciliane del secolo XIII* (Palermo: Poligrafia Empedocle, 1842). On Charles's reputation in nineteenth-century historiography, see David Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou Reassessed," *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): pp. 93–114; Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, p. 70; Longnon, p. 185.

⁷ Sternfeld, pp. 234, 307–10, 313–14.

“knight king” who had sought adventure in Egypt gave way to the “missionary king” who sacrificed everything for the peaceful conquest of souls in Tunis. For Michel Mollat, the king’s last crusade was a harbinger of Christian humanism in which violence gave way to a missionary impulse and newfound respect for the shared humanity of Muslims and Christians. The king’s two most distinguished French biographers—Jean Richard and Jacques Le Goff—both agreed that he went to Tunis to convert al-Mustansir. For Georges Duby, Louis’s last crusade was a “great solitary dream.” As strange as it might appear to us, Jean Longnon argued, the “mystical explanation” of Geoffrey of Beaulieu made the most sense of the diversion to North Africa.⁸

It is only recently that the pendulum has begun to swing back toward Charles. In a revisionary study of the entire range of his diplomatic engagements, Gian Luca Borghese has proposed that Charles was not as fixated on conquering Byzantium as previous generations of scholarship have assumed. His main goal was to establish himself in the *Regno* and protect his new conquest on all sides, including the southern maritime frontier with Ifriqiya. In this scenario, Tunis was not a distraction from his eastern plans; it was a problem in its own right. Borghese has also suggested how unlikely it was for Louis to have concerned himself with Tunis in 1270 if his brother had not established himself in Sicily four years before. While Geoffrey of Beaulieu ascribed motivations to Louis that bordered on the naive, other sources, notably Saba Malaspina, pointed to Charles as responsible for the objective of the expedition.⁹

Borghese is right to take Saba’s testimony seriously. The only question is whether Geoffrey’s account has to be dismissed as a result. Their explanations for the diversion are not mutually exclusive, even though they are usually presented that way. We can gain a better understanding of the crusade by replacing a single conjunction. The crusade was not about money or souls; it was about money and souls; it was not about confrontation or accommodation, it was about confrontation and accommodation; it was not about Louis or Charles, it was about Louis and Charles. Once we swap “or” for “and,” other interpretive possibilities open up as well. The Tunis Crusade could have been about money, souls, and more besides. The Arabic sources, which have been largely ignored, make it clear that there was a strategic dimension to the campaign that both Saba

⁸ Étienne Delaruelle, ‘L’idée de croisade chez Saint Louis’, *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 61 (1960): pp. 244, 251; Mollat, pp. 302–3 (who also quotes Duby on the crusade as Louis’s “great solitary dream”); Jean Richard, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 563–5; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, p. 558; Longnon, p. 195.

⁹ Borghese, p. 56.

and Geoffrey underplayed. Louis and Charles were pursuing different goals in the run-up to the crusade, but neither had to trick the other into the diversion. Unfortunately for the city and its people, in the late spring of 1270 Tunis offered an ideal compromise between the brothers' divergent interests.

CHARLES'S INTERESTS

Money (Part I)

"So he who was thirsty drank from Arab gold," declared Saba Malaspina toward the end of his account of the Tunis Crusade. "The vulgar common people," reported Guillaume of Nangis, "blamed Charles of Anjou [for the truce]; they said that he had arranged the truce in order to return the tribute, which for some years before had not been paid." "Once Charles joined our army, and found his brother dead," wrote Pierre of Condé back to a friend in France, "he decided that he would acquire by violence what he had previously sought after [i.e., the tribute] through negotiations."¹⁰

Even by the standards of thirteenth-century European princes, Charles's financial circumstances on the eve of the Tunis Crusade were dire. To fund the conquest of Sicily, he had borrowed from the papacy, his brother, and northern Italian banking concerns. After the battle of Benevento in 1266, they all wanted their money back. With a crusade of his own to organize, Louis pressed Charles for repayment. In January 1270 Charles surrendered his revenues in the county of Anjou to Louis's men so they could collect 5,000 *livres tournois* of the loan. The papacy still expected its annual tribute of 8,000 gold ounces.¹¹

Though known as a wealthy land, the kingdom of Sicily did not produce as expected. From 1268 to 1270, Sicily suffered a rare run of bad wheat harvests, which caused famine on the island and reduced royal export income. There was also a shortfall in tax revenue, which hurt all the more because Charles's military spending only increased after the conquest.¹²

There was the Hohenstaufen insurgency to put down, the invasion of Conradin from the north, the promotion of Angevin interests on Sardinia and Corfu, and the mounting threat that Michael VIII Palaiologos posed in the Aegean, to which Charles responded with an intricate (and

¹⁰ Saba Malaspina, p. 230; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 478; Pierre of Condé, "Letter to Abbot Mathieu, November 18, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: pp. 667–8.

¹¹ *RCA*, vol. 3: p. 219, no. 634 (Lefevre, no. 49); Sternfeld, p. 330 (appendix A, no. 16); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 80–1, no. 346 (Lefevre, no. 131).

¹² Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou*, pp. 158–9.

expensive) web of military bravado and marriage diplomacy. By the spring of 1270, his financial affairs were very complicated indeed. He was requesting postponements of the tribute he owed to the papal curia, pleading with the Pisans to hand over the money they owed him, diverting taxes raised for his daughter's wedding to buy ships and supplies, wringing special fees out of Calabrian barons, borrowing back money he had just returned to Louis, and taking out fresh loans from Alphonse of Poitiers.¹³

By the time he showed up in Carthage, Charles was broke. Within two weeks of landing, he had to pawn two jewel-encrusted crowns and three chests of luxury clothing for 3,000 gold ounces from King Philippe III.¹⁴ The settlement Charles extracted from al-Mustansir—70,000 gold ounces as his one-third share of the indemnity—was less a windfall than a financial necessity. When he received the first proceeds from Philippe III in November and December, he could only keep about two-thirds of it. Of the 35,000 gold ounces due to Charles, Philippe retained 11,400: 3,000 owed to him, 8,000 to his father, and 400 in shipping costs. That did not include the 3,200 gold ounces (= 8,000 *l.t.*) Charles owed to Alphonse, or the expenses of the crusade that these loans did not cover. These were considerable: on the same day Charles received his cash from Philippe III, he imposed an assessment of 60,000 gold ounces on the mainland provinces of the *Regno* to help cover the costs of the campaign.¹⁵

The Treaty of Tunis provided Charles with tribute in addition to the indemnity. The tribute had political significance, but the money mattered too. During their first round of negotiations, in August 1269, al-Mustansir had conceded the tribute, but could not bring Charles to agree on the arrears or the amount to be paid going forward. It took two further rounds of negotiations (and the crusade, of course) for Charles to accept a 60,000 gold ounce back-payment and 24,000 gold ounces a year from November 1270 onward. The new payment was more than symbolic. It was three times as much as Charles owed the Apostolic See as a papal vassal every year and, at about 60,000 *l.t.*, equaled just under one quarter of the annual revenues of the French crown in the 1250s. It is no wonder that the "Tunisian Tribute" became a major bone of contention in the Angevin-Aragonese conflict over southern Italy in the following century. Given the lengths to which Charles had gone to procure it, it had mattered to him too.

¹³ *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 240–1, no. 141 (Lefevre, no. 201); Sternfeld, p. 273.

¹⁴ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 20, no. 71 (Lefevre, no. 214); *RCA*, vol. 5: pp. 269–70, no. 303 (Lefevre, no. 212); Sternfeld, p. 274.

¹⁵ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 43, no. 151 (Lefevre, no. 264); *RCA*, vol. 6: pp. 374–5, no. 1885 (Lefevre, no. 297); Sternfeld, p. 274.

Securing the *Regno*

Charles's conquest of the *Regno* is often told as a tale of two battles. In reality, establishing Angevin rule over southern Italy involved more than winning at Benevento and Tagliacozzo. We have seen the challenges the Hafsids posed to Angevin control over Sicily: the emergence of Tunis as a haven for Hohenstaufen exiles; the invasion of Sicily they launched from there in autumn 1267; the refusal to pay the wheat export fee to Sicily; and the negative effect that increased piracy and chaos in Sicily had on Provençal and Sicilian trade in the central Mediterranean. Stabilizing relations with al-Mustansir could drive the remaining Hohenstaufen holdouts into the open, where Charles could hunt them down and destroy them; remove a base of operations and logistical support for the insurgents still fighting on the island; start the profitable trade routes flowing again; provide commercial privileges for Sicilian and Provençal merchants, two key Angevin stakeholders; and help stabilize the Angevin fiscal administration with annual infusions of cash.

Through a combination of diplomacy and military intervention, Charles accomplished each of these goals. The provisions of the Treaty of Tunis on Angevin enemies, friendship with al-Mustansir, trade across the Sicilian Straits, and tribute precisely addressed his concerns. It is possible that Charles could have achieved a similar result through negotiations alone. He might have preferred to avoid the enormous upfront expenses involved in campaigning in North Africa. He probably would have received less tribute as a result, but the trade-off could have been worth it. Louis's crusading plans, however, changed the equation. Louis had not stood in the way of Charles's invasion of southern Italy. In return, he expected Charles to support his Holy Land crusade and had invited him to take the cross at Viterbo in 1267. Charles was not willing to go that far, but some degree of logistical support was unavoidable. He made Syracuse available as a base, helped Master Honoratus with his siege engines, and geared up the Angevin administrative machine to resupply the expedition once it landed on Sicily. All this meant that the crusade was something of a sunk cost for Charles once it became clear that it would not be delayed beyond summer 1270. Because he was going to spend a fortune on Louis's crusade no matter what, there was no financial disincentive to solving his problems with Tunis militarily.

Mediterranean Expansion

Once pacified, Sicily was meant to be the core of an expansive Angevin presence in the Mediterranean, fanning out westward toward Provence,

Sardinia, and the frontier with the Crown of Aragon, and eastward toward the Aegean and the frontier with Byzantium. Two main aims guided Charles's first efforts in the east. In the short term, his marriage diplomacy with Hungary and Achaia and his alliance with Emperor Baudouin II of Constantinople were meant to construct a defensive perimeter around the *Regno* against the perceived Byzantine threat. Over the long term, these agreements would lay the groundwork for Angevin expansion into Epiros, Achaia, and the Byzantine heartlands.

A conventional crusade to Egypt or the Holy Land would not advance this dynastic agenda and in fact ran counter to it in several respects. As long as Sicily remained unsettled, Charles did not want to risk a long personal absence on a Holy Land crusade. Sending substantial land and sea forces to the Levant posed an immediate security risk to the *Regno*. A direct attack on Baybars also jeopardized Sicilian and Provençal trade in Alexandria, the major eastern Mediterranean commercial center. By neutralizing Baybars diplomatically, Charles could freely pursue his ambitions in the Aegean.

More importantly still, Charles does not seem to have believed that the battle for Syria could be won on the battlefield. He had first-hand experience of Mamluk military power and had looked on as Baybars drove the crusader states to the brink of extinction. His efforts to negotiate a peace treaty with the sultan for the Franks were less a betrayal of the crusader cause than a clear-eyed assessment of the risks of directly assaulting Mamluk Egypt. Charles saw his own interests at stake in Frankish Syria too. In the late 1270s, he briefly made good on a claim to the throne of the kingdom of Jerusalem. He was alive to the possibility that a crusade to Syria might actually do the Frankish settlements there more harm than good.

LOUIS'S INTERESTS

Tribute, peace in the central Mediterranean, good relations with Baybars: Charles had concrete reasons to direct the crusade against Tunis. Louis's motivations are harder to grasp. After years of preparing a campaign against the Mamluks, why did he abandon the plan at the last minute? The absence of an obvious rationale has allowed Saba Malaspina's accusations to fill the void: perhaps only an act of deceit could have diverted the quintessential crusader king from the Holy Land.

One problem with Saba's conspiracy theory is that all the evidence we have points to Louis and Charles coordinating in the build-up to the

crusade. Their final movements toward Tunis were choreographed in tandem. Charles sailed from Naples to Messina three days after the crusade departed Aigues-Mortes for Cagliari; arrived in Palermo the day after the council of war on the *Montjoie*; and revealed the destination as Tunis to his officials three days after the landing before Carthage. The sequence of events looks more like a collaboration than the unfolding of a plot.

In fact, Tunis was an attractive target for Louis too. His consuming passion for crusading combined elements of grand strategy for the defense of the crusader states with a vision of a more profoundly Christianized world. Though he is often seen as a throwback to an earlier age of crusading, he was in many ways a progressive. He blended Mongol alliances, campaigns in Egypt, Inner Asian missionizing, and domestic reform into a crusading ethos that departed significantly from traditional models. By the late 1260s, as his Christianization drive intensified, his crusader piety became unmoored from the specific goal of crusading in the Holy Land. He was strategically flexible about how best to support the crusader states and, while he could certainly pursue Christianization in the east, he could pursue it elsewhere too.

This flexibility brought Tunis to the fore as Louis's original plan for an eastern campaign collapsed over the late spring of 1270. Logistical problems abounded. On Louis's side, there was the late arrival of the Genoese fleet, which increased the chances of an extended stopover for the army in the Mediterranean over the fall and early winter of 1270–1. On Charles's side, there were the distractions of his other commitments, continued political instability on Sicily, his consequent reluctance to leave the *Regno* for any extended period, and the expensive prospect of hosting a large army for several months as it waited for the spring passage to Syria. There were timing issues for the larger anti-Mamluk coalition as well. The Ilkhan Abaqa had been unable to link up with the first wave of the Holy Land crusade in 1269 because of attacks along his frontier with Transoxiana. He would not be able to rendezvous with the crusade in the east until 1271 at the earliest.¹⁶ Going to Tunis addressed these logistical challenges. It would give Abaqa time to get his act together, keep Charles close to home, avoid the troubles on Sicily, address their root cause by dealing with al-Mustansir, and provide—whether through a sack or a settlement—much needed funding for the next phase of the campaign.

¹⁶ Jean Richard, "La croisade de 1270, premier 'passage général'?" *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 133 (1989): pp. 520–1; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 433.

Conversion

Tunis made sense for Louis as a short-term expedient. It also tapped into deeper royal desires, none greater than the urge to Christianize the world. According to Geoffrey of Beaulieu, Louis first announced his desire to convert al-Mustansir at the baptism of a prominent Parisian Jew. This triumph for the king's domestic program of conversion made him dream of a missionary project beyond the borders of Christendom:

The most catholic king desired with the greatest devotion that the Christian faith, which in the time of Saint Augustine and other orthodox doctors had flourished in Africa, and most of all at Carthage, might flourish again and be extended in our time to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. He thought, therefore, that if a large and renowned army suddenly placed itself before Tunis, the king of Tunis could scarcely have such a reasonable occasion to receive baptism, because, by this means, he could avoid death at the hands of his men, keep possession of his kingdom, and others who wished could become Christian with him.¹⁷

Louis had long conceived of crusading as a vehicle of proselytization. Accounts of his first expedition abound with references to missionary work. The chronicler Guillaume of Palthus estimated that Louis converted forty Muslims to Christianity, while Primat claimed the number exceeded 500. Matthew Paris narrated an interview between a captive Louis and the sultan of Egypt that ended with the king nearly converting his Muslim counterpart. These reports may testify more to the king's reputation as a missionary than to his actual success, but other evidence is more concrete. In a letter of March 31, 1249 to Pope Innocent IV, Eudes of Châteauroux, cardinal-bishop of Tusculum, papal legate for the crusade, and intimate royal advisor, described a mass conversion of fifty-seven Muslim captives on Cyprus, many of whom he baptized with his own hands. Some of these converts may have returned to France with Louis. Royal accounts of 1256 list pensions for six formerly Muslim *baptisati* (baptized ones).¹⁸

A few months before the mass conversion of Muslim prisoners, Louis had dispatched an embassy to the Mongols after hearing reports of their sympathy for Christianity. The reports came from two envoys from the *noyan* (general) Eljigidei, who had reached the crusader camp on Cyprus

¹⁷ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22.

¹⁸ Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 161–5; *Seventh Crusade*, p. 82.

in December 1248. They delivered a letter that departed from the usual Mongol demands for submission. Instead, Eljigidei wrote warmly to Louis, expressing the hope that he might meet the king in person, asking God to grant him victory “over his enemies who despise the cross,” mentioning the Mongol edict of protection to Christian clergy (which actually applied to religious officials of all faiths, but never mind), and urging him to treat all Christian denominations in the east equally. What the envoys had to say was even more encouraging. They told Louis that Eljigidei was a Christian and that the *qaghan* Güyük had also accepted baptism. They also proposed a military alliance: while Louis invaded Egypt in 1249, Eljigidei would attack Baghdad. Suspicious but intrigued, the king sent three Dominican brothers—André of Longjumeau, his brother Guillaume, and Jean of Carcassonne—in search of the Mongol general who seemed to love the Christians so much.¹⁹

The friars traveled with cups and liturgies to celebrate mass, a relic of the cross, and a scarlet tent to serve as a miniature chapel, embroidered with scenes of the crucifixion. When they eventually tracked Eljigidei down, he told them that Güyük was dead. They would have to meet with the *qaghan*’s widow, the regent Oghul Qaimish, instead. She was not as welcoming as Eljigidei’s letter to Louis had led the friars to expect. When they met up with the king again in Caesarea in 1251, they brought with them a letter from her accepting his “tribute” and demanding more of the same in the years ahead.²⁰

Louis was discouraged, but not for long. In 1253, another mendicant brother left the crusader army on a journey into the heart of Inner Asia. The Franciscan William of Rubruck wanted to preach the gospel to the Mongols and minister to some Latin Christians he had heard were their prisoners. Despite the failure of his embassy to Eljigidei, Louis was eager to support this new missionary venture. He provided William with a letter of introduction that congratulated the Mongol prince Sartaq on his rumored conversion and encouraged him to treat Christians well. Misunderstanding ensued once again, as William was mistaken for a royal envoy bearing a letter of submission and was sent up the ranks of the Mongol leadership until he was summoned for an audience with Möngke

¹⁹ *Seventh Crusade*, pp. 65–9, 74–81.

²⁰ Joinville, pp. 224–6, 422–36 (Smith, pp. 178–9, 262–7); Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), pp. 99–100; Jean Richard, “La politique orientale de Saint Louis,” in *Septième centenaire de la mort de Saint-Louis: Actes des colloques de Royaumont et de Paris* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976), pp. 201–2; Paul Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté*, 3 vols (Paris: A. Picard, 1923), vol. 3: pp. 160–214; Amand Rastoul, “André de Longjumeau,” in *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique* (Paris: Letouzey et ané, 1912–), pp. 1677–8.

(r. 1251–9), the new *qaghan*. Rather than convert, Möngke reaffirmed the syncretism that was central to traditional Mongol religion. “We Mo’als,” he told Rubruck, “believe that there is only one God, through whom we have life and through whom we die, and towards him we direct our hearts . . . But just as God has given the hands several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths.”²¹

On the Egyptian campaign, Louis combined missionizing, crusading, and diplomacy with mixed results. While Muslim prisoners might accept Christianity, Mongol princes remained elusive. Missionizing became an important component of the king’s domestic agenda when he returned to France in 1254. His targets were the kingdom’s Jewish communities, whose threat to the religious purity of the realm had always troubled him.

Louis’s first efforts to eliminate Jewish practices he regarded as sinful focused on moneylending. In the Ordinance of Melun (1230), Louis and his mother (and regent) Blanche of Castile confronted a practice that had become a staple of the French economy and a major point of contact between Ashkenazi Jewry and the Christian majority. The ordinance forbade Christian borrowers from usury, liquidated outstanding loans, and withdrew royal and baronial enforcement of loan repayment to Jews. If a Jew fled her lord’s domains to avoid these regulations, the lord could hunt her down and bring her back, “like his own serf.”²² In comparing Jewish legal status to serfdom, the ordinance affirmed attitudes that were widespread in thirteenth-century northern Europe. The secular rulers who allowed Jews to settle in their domains usually regarded them as a kind of chattel.²³

To a degree, Louis shared this common view of the Jew as an exploitable financial asset. He was at the forefront of efforts to professionalize government in medieval Europe. Administrative reform was expensive, and taxing or seizing Jewish income could help balance the books. Louis was no stranger to such expedients. Despite the coercive measures buttressing it, the royal usury ban proved difficult to enforce. On several occasions after 1230, therefore, the king authorized a *captio*, or “taking,” of the proceeds of Jewish moneylending. In 1248, on the eve of his first crusade,

²¹ *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, trans. Peter Jackson, introduction, notes, and appendices by Peter Jackson with David O. Morgan (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), pp. 33–47, 236.

²² *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: 53–4. English translation: Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1980), pp. 213–15.

²³ The provision was actually stronger than the serfdom analogy implied. For Christian peasants, the famous adage of the day was “town air makes a man free,” meaning that a serf could gain freedom after living for a year and a day in a self-governing town. Town air had no such effect on the Jews: according to the Ordinance of Melun, the dominion their lords exercised over them knew no geographical bounds.

he authorized a *captio generalis*, which he enforced by seizing the property of Jewish lenders until the debts were surrendered to the crown.²⁴

In several respects, however, Louis parted ways with the exploitative paradigm that marked relations between northern European secular lords and “their” Jews. The moral implications of the *captio* troubled him; he worried about profiting from a practice that his legislation aimed to stop. “He did not wish to retain their poison,” said one chronicler, and the latent hypocrisy involved in taxing usury while paying lip service to toothless decrees against it was intolerable to him. When he collected a *captio*, he retained the principal for the crown but tried to return the interest on the debt to the Christian borrower. In the late 1230s, Pope Gregory IX helped him solve the problem of what to do with the interest payment if the borrower could not be found. The pope allowed the king to channel the unaccounted-for interest toward a pious cause, such as support for the Latin empire of Constantinople in 1237 and Louis’s own crusade in 1248. When Louis called for Jews to forgo moneylending or face exile in 1253 and 1254, he showed that he was willing to pass up the profits of moneylending if it meant removing a blight on his realm and conscience.²⁵

There were other early signs that Jewish beliefs and practices greatly concerned the king. At the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Pope Innocent III had called on Jews to distinguish themselves from Christians in the manner of their dress. Few secular rulers seem to have enforced this measure, but Louis took it seriously and became the first French king to enforce the dress requirement. With further papal encouragement, he also became concerned with Jewish devotional life. In 1239 a Jewish convert to Christianity named Nicholas Donin told Pope Gregory IX that the Talmud had replaced the Bible as the key sacred text for Jews and that it was filled with blasphemies and insults against Christianity. Gregory was shocked and wrote to the Christian monarchs of Europe, encouraging them to seize copies of the Talmud for investigation. Louis and Blanche carried out the pope’s wishes in March 1240 and then assembled a tribunal to interrogate Jewish religious leaders on the text. Featuring prominently on the panel was Donin himself, who had grown up in La

²⁴ For Louis’s policy on Jewish moneylending, see Gérard Nahon, “Les ordonnances de Saint Louis sur les juifs,” *Les nouveaux cahiers* 6 (1970): pp. 18–35; Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 103–47; and William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), pp. 129–46.

²⁵ Guillaume of Chartres, p. 34 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 142); *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, ed. Shlomo Simonsohn, 8 vols (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988–91), vol. 1: no. 157; *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: pp. 73–4.

Rochelle and converted to Christianity sometime after 1225. After Rabbi Yehiel of Paris and others underwent interrogation, the Talmud was found guilty, sentenced to burn, and forbidden to Jews. The Jewish communities appealed the sentence to the papacy, which mitigated the punishment to excising the offensive passages. Even though the papal ruling became standard policy in the rest of Europe, the French court refused to rescind the original sentence. In 1242, twenty-four cartloads of Talmuds were burned in Paris. It is possible that not every copy of the Talmud was destroyed, since Louis renewed his demand for Jews to renounce the text in the Great Reform Ordinance of 1254.²⁶

Nicholas Donin's example pointed to another way of removing Jewish error from France. Converting Jews became an obsession of Louis's later years. In the 1250s, he began to sponsor their christenings, personally. He also offered life pensions to converts, with rights of survivorship. The spouse of a deceased convert continued to receive half the original pension. Royal officials converted Jewish orphans to Christianity as a matter of course and provided for their upkeep. The children appear in royal records as *Ludovici baptisati*, the adults as *Ludovici conversi*. We do not know how many Jews converted to Christianity in this period, but by 1260 there were enough of them living in the towns of the Île de France that Louis had to issue an ordinance clarifying their jurisdictional status. The mayor of Senlis, as well as the mayors of the region's other "good towns," would have justice over "baptized Jews" charged with crimes.²⁷

Louis's initial approach to converting Jews combined the carrot and the stick, rewarding Jews who received baptism while punishing those who refused it. In 1269, his methods shifted toward the coercive end of the spectrum. In March, he collaborated with his son-in-law and fellow crusader Thibaut, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, on a *captio* of Jewish assets in the royal domains and the county of Champagne.²⁸ On June 18 he issued two ordinances on the advice of Paul Christian, a

²⁶ Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud," *Revue des études juives* 1 (1880): pp. 247–61; 2 (1881): pp. 248–70; 3 (1881): pp. 39–57; Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), pp. 19–38; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 31–3; Jordan, *French Monarchy and the Jews*, p. 139; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 317–25; Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 139–42.

²⁷ *Ordonnances*, vol. 11: p. 333; Nahon, "Ordonnances de Saint Louis," pp. 23, 28; Jordan, *French Monarchy and the Jews*, pp. 149–50; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, pp. 808–9.

²⁸ *Layettes*, no. 5488.

Dominican and converted Jew. In one, the king required Jews to wear a badge; in the other, he compelled them to attend Paul's sermons, surrender their books to him, and answer his questions.²⁹

Six years previously, in 1263, Paul had participated in the Barcelona Disputation, which forced Jewish religious leaders to debate the messianic claims of Christianity in the presence of King Jaume I of Aragon. Now back in northern France, he was ready to collaborate with Louis on a new missionizing campaign:

Since our beloved brother in Christ, Paul Christian of the Order of Preaching Brethren, the bearer of the present letter, wishes and intends, for the glory of the divine name, to preach to the Jews the word of light, in order, we understand, to evangelize for the exaltation of the Christian faith, we order you to force those Jews residing in your jurisdiction to present themselves to hear from him and without objection the word of the Lord and to present their books as the aforesaid brother shall require. You shall compel the Jews to respond fully, without calumny or subterfuge, on those matters which relate to their law, concerning which the aforesaid brother might interrogate them, whether in sermons in their synagogues or elsewhere.³⁰

As he geared up for the coming crusade, Louis compelled Parisian Jews to attend Paul's sermons. According to a contemporary chronicler:

In the same year [1269] . . . a certain friar of the Dominican Order . . . who had been a Jew and was a learned cleric in Mosaic law and in our law, came and publicly preached to the Jews in the royal court in Paris and in the court of the Dominicans. They came there at the order of the king, and he showed them that their law was null and invalid, that for a long time they had not observed it, and that they have deviated daily from all its articles.³¹

As in Barcelona, Paul sometimes supplemented his preaching with disputations against Jewish scholars. Abraham ben Samuel of Rouen debated Paul in front of audiences of Jewish men, women, and children at the mendicant chapter houses of Paris and the royal court.³²

Paul and Louis aimed to create a coercive environment that would promote conversion without compelling it by force. According to Geoffrey

²⁹ *Ordonnances*, vol. 1: p. 294; Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris: Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au moyen âge* (Paris: Peeters, 1994), appendix 1, p. 35.

³⁰ Shatzmiller, *Deuxième controverse*, appendix 1, p. 35. English translation: Chazan, *Church, State and Jew*, pp. 261–2.

³¹ Léopold Delisle, "Notes sur quelques manuscrits du Musée britannique," *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris* 4 (1877): p. 189. English translation: Chazan, *Church, State and Jew*, p. 262.

³² Shatzmiller, *Deuxième controverse*, appendix 3, pp. 43–76.

of Beaulieu, Louis took a similar approach with al-Mustansir. The crusade army was not supposed to compel the emir's conversion at sword-point; its presence outside Tunis was meant to intimidate the populace into allowing the emir to repudiate Islam voluntarily. The premise behind the plan was that al-Mustansir was ready to make the change and just needed help with the final step. Once he accepted Christianity, he could work with Louis and his men to bring everyone else around.

What made Louis think that al-Mustansir would turn Christian? Part of the answer had to do with the wider context in which Louis evaluated that possibility. The seeming openness of key Mongol leaders to Christianity and the knowledge their conquests brought to Europeans of the existence of significant Christian communities (mainly Nestorian) living to the east of the Islamic regimes of western Asia created a broader optimism in some European circles about the prospects for evangelizing more generally.

Most crucially, though, Louis's belief in the plausibility of the emir's conversion was grounded in the special place that North Africa occupied in the mental geography of Europeans who shared the king's desire to Christianize the world. While crusading was viewed as the primary means of expanding Latin Christendom into western Asia and the Iberian Peninsula, it did not appear in the Maghreb until deep in the thirteenth century. In the 1250s, King Alfonso X and Pope Alexander IV anticipated the Tunis campaign by promoting an "African Crusade" that attacked the Moroccan Atlantic port of Salé in 1260. Prior to those expeditions, papal policy toward North Africa had focused on protecting the existing Christian communities of the region and gaining converts among the Muslim majority. In this context, a conversionary narrative about North Africa took hold among some members of the Mendicant orders, their supporters in the papal curia, and sympathetic secular rulers, who dreamed of restoring the "land of Augustine" to its former position as a bulwark of the church. This "dream of conversion," as Father Burns once called it, colored Louis's perception of Tunis and its emir.³³

The smaller role played by crusading in the thirteenth-century European encounter with North Africa went along with the development of strong

³³ Charles-Emmanuel Dufourcq, "Un projet castillien du XIII^e siècle: La croisade d'Afrique," *Revue d'histoire et de civilisation du Maghreb* 1 (1966): pp. 26–51; Manuel González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2004), pp. 138–9; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade: Castile and the Battle for the Strait* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 11–33; Michael Lower, "The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century North Africa," *Speculum* 89 (2014): pp. 616–28; Robert I. Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): pp. 1386–434.

commercial relationships among the Hafsids, the Hohenstaufen, the Catalans, the 'Abd al-Wadids, the Italian maritime republics, and the Marinids. Al-Mustansir's openness toward the northern Mediterranean world brought European Christians to Ifriqiya in considerable numbers. In addition to the mercenaries serving in the palace guard and the merchants trading in the markets there were also Christian slaves in the major cities. These new arrivals made up the vast bulk of the Christian population. There were likely to have been few, if any, Christians from North African communities that pre-existed the Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries left in Ifriqiya in al-Mustansir's day. By the late twelfth century, indigenous North African Christianity had faded away after a long decline.³⁴

Ecclesiastical structures disappeared along with the indigenous Christians. If Pope Leo IX could lament that only five bishops remained in "all Africa" in 1053, and Gregory VII could regret the presence of only two in 1076, by the early thirteenth century there was no formal church hierarchy for the region at all. The first efforts to minister to the newcomers from the northern Mediterranean were necessarily ad hoc. Each merchant community brought its own clergy to staff the *funduk's* chapel and bury the dead in its cemetery. The Pisans and Genoese dedicated their chapels in Tunis to Mary, while the merchants of Marseille dedicated theirs in Bijaya to Peter. Christian captives and slaves lacked the means to import clergy, of course, but at the end of the twelfth century two religious orders came into being to serve them and buy their freedom if they could. Although much of the early work of the Trinitarians and the Mercedarians in Ifriqiya is shrouded in legend, they seem to have been active in Tunis and Bijaya from the 1210s onward.³⁵

The third major Christian group in Hafsid territory—the mercenaries—initially lacked pastoral care. As they grew in numbers and influence, this became a concern to the papacy, which began to re-engage with the Maghreb

³⁴ Lower, "Papacy and Mercenaries," pp. 613–16; Dominique Valérian, "La permanence du christianisme au Maghreb: L'apport problématique des sources latines," in *Islamisation et arabisation de l'Occident musulman médiéval (VIIe–XIIe siècle)*, ed. Dominique Valérian (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011), pp. 139, 149; Mark A. Handley, "Disputing the End of African Christianity," in *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. A. H. Merrills (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 309–10, 304; Mohamed Talbi, "Le Christianisme maghrébin de la conquête musulmane à sa disparition: Une tentative d'explication," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi, *Papers in Mediaeval Studies* 9 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), pp. 329–30, 338–9.

³⁵ Lower, "Papacy and Mercenaries," pp. 613–16; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 452; Giulio Cipollone, *Trinità e liberazione tra Cristianità e Islam* (Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 2000); James William Brodman, *Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain: The Order of Mercy on the Christian–Islamic Frontier* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

from the pontificate of Honorius III onward. The popes worried about mercenaries apostatizing and saw them as a potential source of leverage in diplomacy with their employers. The papacy therefore threw its support behind mendicant efforts to minister to the Latin Christian communities of North Africa, including even the Christian soldiers who served infidels for pay.

Though Franciscans were present in Tunis as early as 1219, the first good view we have of mendicant activity comes in 1234, when the leaders of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the city wrote to Ramon of Peñafort with questions about ministering to their unconventional flock. Ramon was a leading canonist, a supporter of the mendicant mission to North Africa, and a papal penitentiary. He offered guidance on a host of issues, ranging from the mundane (the papal embargo on trading in war materials) to the deeply problematic (mercenaries who tried to deal with bad debts by pledging family members to their Muslim creditors). Though his answers varied, the underlying goal was always the same: to prevent apostasy and keep even the most troubled North African Christians in the church.³⁶

Even as the mendicants defended a Christian community they saw as vulnerable, they tried to expand it through a program of evangelization. By al-Mustansir's day, they were pursuing this aim more discreetly than they had when they first arrived in North Africa. In an incident traditionally dated to January 1220, five Franciscan friars had achieved martyrdom by preaching in the streets of Marrakesh, in deliberate violation of local norms. Pope Honorius III introduced a more staid approach in the mid-1220s. He instructed two Dominicans on their way to Morocco in 1225 to "convert the infidel, build up the fallen, strengthen the weak, comfort the doubters, and confirm the strong." The missionary work, in other words, should be pursued in tandem with pastoral care for local Christians and should not compromise their safety or that of the brothers themselves. This program focused on the western Maghreb, but the Hafids were targeted too: in 1246, Pope Innocent IV wrote to Abu Zakariya to recommend a new bishop of Morocco, who, the pope hoped, would inspire a "new planting" of Christianity throughout North Africa.³⁷

³⁶ Franciscus Balme and Ceslaus Paban, eds, *Raymundiana seu documenta quae pertinent S. Raymundi de Pennaforti vitam et scripta*. Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum historica 6 (Rome and Stuttgart: In domo Generalitiae, apud Jos. Roth, bibliopolam, 1898), no. 18. John Tolan has recently re-edited and translated the text: John Tolan, *Ramon de Penafort's Responses to Questions Concerning Relations between Christians and Saracens: Critical Edition and Translation* (hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00761257, 2012).

³⁷ James D. Ryan, "Missionary Saints of the High Middle Ages: Martyrdom, Popular Veneration, and Canonization," *Catholic Historical Review* 90 (2004): pp. 8–15; Demetrio

For brothers who wanted to engage with non-Christians by learning Arabic and Hebrew, the Dominicans founded language schools. In 1250, the Spanish provincial chapter of the order assigned eight brothers “to the study of Arabic” (*ad studium arabicum*). The order did not specify where the friars were supposed to study. Two possibilities are Tunis and Murcia. Pere Marsili, who completed a loose Latin translation of Jaume I’s autobiography around 1313, to which he added material on Ramon of Peñafort, said that Ramon founded language schools in those cities and assigned Catalan brothers to study there. Later evidence points to Mallorca as another possible site for this early *studium Arabicum*.³⁸ Humbert of Romans, master-general of the order from 1254 to 1263, also encouraged language study as he made evangelizing non-Christians an explicit focus of Dominican work. In 1255, he called for volunteers to learn Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, “or other barbaric languages” so they could “depart the fortress” of their own nations “for the salvation of souls.”³⁹

The promotion of Arabic study coincided with growing optimism in the papal curia and among leading Dominicans that proselytization efforts might succeed in North Africa. In June 1256, Pope Alexander IV ordered the Spanish provincial chapter of the Dominicans to send more brothers to al-Andalus and “throughout the whole kingdom of Tunis” to receive

Mansilla, ed., *La documentación pontificia de Honorio III (1216–1227)*, Monumenta Hispaniae Vaticana: Sección Registros 2 (Rome: Instituto español de historia eclesiastica, 1965), no. 562; Augusto Quintana Prieto, ed., *La documentación pontificia de Inocencio IV (1243–1254)*, Monumenta Hispaniae Vaticana: Sección Registros 7 (Rome: Instituto español de historia eclesiastica, 1987), no. 325.

³⁸ Ramon Hernández, “Las primeras actas de los capítulos provinciales de la Provincia de España,” *Archivo Dominicano* 5 (1984): p. 32; English translation: Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews*, pp. 105–6. For Pere Marsili’s statement about Ramon of Peñafort, see *Raymundiana*, p. 12 and Pere Marsili, *Opera omnia*, ed. Antoni Biosca Bas (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), p. 429; for the later evidence relating to Mallorca, see Eusebi Colomer, “La controversia islamo-judeo-cristiana en la obra apologética de Ramon Martí,” in *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre Cristianismo, Judaísmo e Islamismo durante la edad media en la Península Ibérica*, ed. Horacio Santiago-Otero (Brepols: Société internationale pour l’étude de la philosophie médiévale, 1994), pp. 234–7. The Dominican language schools have been the subject of a long-running historical controversy. See André Berthier, “Les écoles de langues orientales fondées au XIII^e siècle par les Dominicains en Espagne et en Afrique,” *Revue africaine* 73 (1932): pp. 84–103; José María Coll, “Escuelas de lenguas orientales en los siglos XIII y XIV,” *Analecta sacra tarraconensis* 17 (1944): pp. 115–38; Pedro Ribes Montane, “Inicio y clausura del ‘Studium Arabicum’ de Túnez (S. XIII),” *Anthologica annua: Publicaciones del instituto español de estudios eclesiasticos* 26–7 (1981): pp. 615–18; Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, pp. 104–15.

³⁹ Benedictus Maria Reichert, “Litterae encyclicae magistrorum generalium,” in *Monumenta Ordinum Fratrum Praedicatorum historica*, 26 vols to date (Rome: Institutum historicum fratrum praedicatorum, 1896–), vol. 5: pp. 17–20; discussion and English translation: Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, p. 45.

and baptize Christian converts.⁴⁰ Four years later, Alexander received good reports about their work. He told Ramon of Peñafort that, “we have heard that the preaching brothers sent to Tunis and to other barbarous nations, as much to convert the infidel as to strengthen the faithful, have harvested not a little fruit.”⁴¹ Ramon shared the pope’s assessment of the situation. In a letter to an unnamed master-general of the Dominican Order, probably written in the mid-1250s, he listed six “fruits” of the friars’ ministry in Africa and Spain. The first five pertained to the pastoral care of Latin Christians: (1) mercenary soldiers working in the Maghreb; (2) slaves; (3) apostates who had returned to the fold; (4) those who had once believed that Christianity was idolatrous but had renounced that opinion; and (5) captives. “The sixth fruit,” however:

is among the Saracens, to whom the grace and favor of God has so much been brought—and especially to the powerful, and even to Miramolin [*amir al-mu’minin*] or king of Tunis—that at present the door appears open to virtually inestimable fruits, so long as the harvesters do not abandon their work; and even now many of them, especially in Murcia, have been converted to the faith both secretly and openly.⁴²

While Ramon remained focused on existing Latin Christian communities, he also allowed himself to dream of a spectacular conversion: al-Mustansir of Tunis, identified here by his self-styled caliphal title.

The growing, if fundamentally misplaced, optimism about Muslim conversion expressed by Ramon of Peñafort and many others did not go unnoticed in the wider Mediterranean. It inspired what we could call “the conversion gambit,” by which a non-Christian ruler would promise baptism to gain diplomatic concessions. We have already encountered this stratagem several times: when the Hafsids prince ‘Abd al-‘Aziz fled Tunis seeking a papal baptism in 1236; when the Ilkhan Abaqa touted his Christian bona fides to Louis in 1269; when Michael VIII Palaiologos promised to renounce eastern Orthodoxy in favor of the Latin rite at the same time; and when Hafsids soldiers approached the crusader camp and offered to convert in the summer of 1270.

Other examples of the conversion gambit can be cited as well. In 1239, Guillaume Champenois of Tripoli (perhaps the Dominican author of *De statu Sarracenorum*) approached the leadership of the Barons’ Crusade on

⁴⁰ Text printed in Coll, “Escuelas,” pp. 136–8.

⁴¹ Thomas Ripoll, ed., *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 8 vols (Rome: Ex typographia Hieronymi Mainardi, 1729–40), vol. 1: no. 275.

⁴² Text printed in Coll, “Escuelas,” 138; I follow the 1256–8 dating given by Burns in his “Dream of Conversion,” p. 1392.

behalf of the emir of Hama, who wanted the crusaders to come to his city so he could become a Christian without fear of reprisals. The crusaders smelled a ruse—the emir of Aleppo was threatening Hama and the arrival of the crusader army might encourage him to withdraw—and declined to march north. In Ifriqiya, the Tunis Crusade seems to have set a precedent for future maneuvers along these lines. In 1281, the governor of Qasantina, Ibn al-Wazir, told the Aragonese that he would convert to Christianity only if they could install him in Tunis first. In 1313, the Hafsid emir of Tunis Ibn al-Lihyani revealed to King Jaume II of Aragon that he was a Christian “in his heart” and at the same time asked for military support against his many enemies.⁴³

In 1270, Baybars devised a clever variation on the gambit when he sent two Assassins to murder the powerful Frankish baron Philippe of Montfort, lord of Tyre, and his nephew Julian, lord of Sidon. According to the “Templar of Tyre,” the Assassins infiltrated the retinues of the lords by receiving baptism, then exploited their newfound positions of trust to carry out their attacks. The lord of Tyre was killed coming out of his chapel one morning, while the lord of Sidon, after being warned what was afoot, managed to avoid the attentions of his Assassin “godson.”⁴⁴ In the spring of 1272, as we shall see, Baybars reprised this plan when Prince Edward of England came to Syria. Like the rest, these schemes depended on powerful Latin Christians believing that Muslim conversions were not only desirable but possible.

Louis fell into this camp. His close links to Dominican enthusiasts who could “confirm” al-Mustansir’s pro-Christian feelings made him susceptible to the conversion gambit. As a great Dominican patron, he was familiar with Ramon of Peñafort, who had served as master-general from 1238 to 1240. The king also knew Humbert of Romans. Before he promoted missionizing and language study as master-general, Humbert had served as provincial prior of the Dominicans of France. He did not go to Egypt with Louis, but the duties of his office involved him in the fundraising, governmental reform, and anti-heretical/Jewish initiatives that preceded the campaign. After he finished his term as master-general in 1263, Humbert became a crusade propagandist. In the late 1260s, he helped promote Louis’s war against Baybars by composing a manual on

⁴³ Richard, *Saint Louis*, p. 564; Brunschvig, vol. 1: pp. 81–3; Michael Lower, “Ibn al-Lihyani: Sultan of Tunis and would-be Christian convert,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24 (2009): pp. 17–27.

⁴⁴ *Templare di Tiro*, pp. 130–6 (Crawford, pp. 63–6).

Preaching the Holy Cross against Saracens. Christianization and crusade went together for Humbert and Louis both.⁴⁵

The king's relationship with André of Longjumeau went back to 1238, when the Dominican diplomat and missionary went to Constantinople and then Venice to collect the Crown of Thorns for display in Sainte-Chapelle. After that André went to the Near East for Pope Innocent IV. As with Humbert, his work combined missionary outreach with crusade promotion. He sounded out Ayyubid princes on the possibility of allying with Rome against the Mongol onslaught, tried to persuade Jacobite and Nestorian church leaders to accept papal primacy, and made contact with Mongol companies moving into the Near East. He was well prepared to represent Louis on the mission to the *qaghan* Güyük in 1250. André met up with Louis again at Caesarea in 1253, but after that his movements become harder to trace. He seems to have gravitated toward the western Mediterranean, perhaps in response to Humbert of Romans's call for more missionizing and pastoral work there. He is reported to have made himself known to al-Mustansir. Geoffrey of Beaulieu described Louis on his deathbed as calling out for "a certain brother of the Preaching Order, who had gone there [Tunis] another time, and was known to the king of Tunis." The *Grand chroniques de France*, the quasi-official history of the Capetian dynasty produced at Saint-Denis, named this friar as André of Longjumeau.⁴⁶

Francis Cendra linked France to Tunis as well. In 1262, Francis traveled up to Paris to receive a gift from Louis on behalf of the Dominican convent of St Catherine's in Barcelona: a single thorn from the crown André of Longjumeau had brought back from Constantinople. The gift of this precious relic affirmed an intimate relationship between the convent and their distant royal patron.⁴⁷

Ramon Martí was a Catalan friar who achieved a mastery of Arabic (and also Hebrew) that was rare within the order. He was one of the eight brothers whom the Spanish Provincial Chapter assigned to study Arabic in 1250. By the end of the decade, he commanded the language well enough to produce two polemical treatises: *Explanatio simboli apostolorum* and

⁴⁵ Edward Brett, *Humbert of Romans: His Life and Views of Thirteenth-Century Society* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984); Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, pp. 43–51.

⁴⁶ Delaruelle, "L'idée de croisade," p. 256; Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté*, vol. 3: p. 221; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 88–95; Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 23 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 121); Jules Viard, ed., *Les grandes chroniques de France: Tome septième (Louis VIII et Saint Louis)* (Paris: Librairie de la Société de l'histoire de France, 1932), pp. 280–1.

⁴⁷ Daniel Antonin Mortier, *Histoire des maîtres généraux de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs*, 8 vols (Paris: A. Picard, 1902–20), vol. 1: p. 526; Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, p. 229.

De seta Machometi. Both works defended Christian doctrine against Islamic beliefs. Based on a close reading of the Qur'an, the *Sira* of the prophet, and several hadith collections, Ramon sought to demonstrate the falsehood of Muhammad's claims to prophethood and the miserable fate that awaited those who believed his blasphemies.

By the early 1260s, Ramon had turned to Rabbinic Judaism. In 1264, the year after the Barcelona Disputation, he joined a panel of clerics to investigate alleged anti-Christian passages in the Talmud. He would go on to produce two of the seminal works of medieval Latin Christian anti-Jewish polemic: the *Capistrum Judaeorum* ("Muzzle of the Jews," c.1267) and the *Pugio fidei* ("Dagger of Faith," c.1278). As their titles suggest, these works fantasize a progressively violent intellectual confrontation with Judaism, moving from the forcible silencing of Jews envisioned in the *Capistrum* to "cutting the throat" of Jewish "perfidy" in the *Pugio*.⁴⁸

Sometime in early spring 1269, Francis Cendra and Ramon Martí went to Tunis. It is not clear whether Francis had been there before, but Ramon had. In one passage of the *Capistrum*, completed two years before the 1269 mission, Ramon claimed to have already lived in Muslim lands for twelve years.⁴⁹ In another, he described the old Christian churches in Tunis that had been turned into mosques but retained many of their original features. When he visited them he could still read the names of former bishops inscribed on the altars.⁵⁰ Pere Marsili, writing around 1313, claimed that Ramon was "most close and dear to not only the king of Aragon, but also to Saint Louis king of France and to the good king of Tunis."⁵¹ From Tunis, Francis and Ramon sailed to Agde, were spotted by Jaume I of Aragon's cook, declined an invitation to visit with the king, and headed north toward Paris. They seem to have been in the city when Louis told the Tunisian envoys, about three weeks later, that he hoped al-Mustansir would convert to Christianity.

⁴⁸ André Berthier, "Un maître orientaliste du XIII^e siècle: Raymond Martin, O. P.," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 6 (1936): pp. 267–8; Jeremy Cohen, "The Christian Adversary of Solomon Ibn Adret," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 71 (1980): pp. 51–2; Peter Antes, "Raymond Martin O. P.: Une voix chrétienne du XIII^e siècle face à l'Islam," in *L'Occident musulman et l'Occident chrétien au moyen âge* (Rabat: Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines-Rabat, 1995), pp. 249–55; Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, pp. 125–8.

⁴⁹ Ramon Martí, *Capistrum iudaeorum*, ed. Adolfo Robles Sierra, 2 vols (Corpus Islamo-Christianum, series Latina 5, Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), vol. 2: p. 184; Montane, "Studium Arabicum," p. 616.

⁵⁰ Martí, *Capistrum iudaeorum*, vol. 2: p. 178; Colomer, "Controversia islamo-judeo-cristiana," pp. 236–7, fn. 16.

⁵¹ Marsili, *Opera omnia*, p. 394; quoted in Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews*, p. 231.

Money (Part II)

When French Jews refused to convert to Christianity, Louis would take their money and put it toward a pious cause. Seizures of Jewish assets helped fund his crusades in 1248 and 1269. Geoffrey of Beaulieu described a similar strategy in play at Tunis in the summer of 1270:

That city was full of money and gold and infinite riches, as was possible with a city that had never been conquered. Thereupon, it was hoped that if, God willing, the said city were captured by the Christian army, the treasures found there would contribute very effectively to the conquest and restoration of the Holy Land.⁵²

Even if al-Mustansir remained a Muslim, Tunisian treasure could fund the Syrian or Egyptian phase of the campaign.

Arabic sources insisted that Charles was not the only Capetian brother interested in extracting wealth from North Africa. For the Mamluk historian and legal scholar Qutb al-Din Musa al-Yunini, Louis's expedition was quite literally about money. In al-Yunini's account, officials in the Tunisian customs house caught French merchants trying to pay the duty they owed on their goods with counterfeit currency. The workers brought this deception to the attention of the emir, who asked, sensibly enough, "Who is the richest among the Franks?" and when told that it was the Genoese, had them arrested and confiscated their money. The Genoese naturally turned to the French king for redress and offered to subsidize his expenses if he would lead an army against Tunis. Louis agreed and a deal was struck: the French and the Genoese would ally together against al-Mustansir until the Genoese merchants had been released and compensated for their losses. After a long siege, "peace occurred on the return of the Genoese money."⁵³

The details of al-Yunini's account of the diversion—hitherto ignored—are open to question. The Genoese were shocked when the crusade turned against Tunis and did not collude with Louis to direct it there. Al-Mustansir had Genoese merchants arrested after the crusade arrived, not before. But the larger context of commercial disputes that al-Yunini described is compelling and important. The rumors al-Yunini was hearing about counterfeiting in Hafsid Ifriqiya had some foundation. In the early 1260s, al-Mustansir introduced a copper coin—the *handus*—to facilitate small-scale trade and address concerns about the devaluation of the Hafsid silver currency. The *handus*, however, soon succumbed to a counterfeiting

⁵² Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 118).

⁵³ Al-Yunini, vol. 2: pp. 454–6.

campaign that rendered it nearly valueless, prompting riots in Tunis. Al-Mustansir restored calm by suppressing the new coin and forgiving the rioters, but the failure of the *handus* had broader implications as well: an unreliable local currency could allow currency manipulation and counterfeiting to proliferate, giving rise to the kind of currency disputes that al-Yunini described.⁵⁴

A trading relationship gone wrong was also central to Ibn Khaldun's account of the Tunis Crusade, which involved French merchants and their dealings with a Tunisian financier named Abu al-Abbas al-Lulyani. Belonging to a politically prominent family in al-Mahdiya (his father was the governor of the city), al-Lulyani started off as a tax collector for the Hafsid. He was an upwardly mobile member of the Ifriqiyan urban elite. Not content with local prominence, he set his sights on Tunis. At first, he succeeded brilliantly. Shrugging off charges of embezzlement, he became a banker to Hafsid officialdom and used the proceeds to invest in Mediterranean commerce. As we have seen, though, the competition for preeminence in al-Mustansir's court was unforgiving. He ran afoul of other court favorites, who spread the rumor that he was planning an uprising in al-Mahdiya and turned the emir against him. When al-Mustansir remarked, ominously, to a courtier that "Today is a day of tears," the courtier replied, "and today harm will be driven away." Al-Lulyani soon found out what that meant. He was arrested, interrogated, tortured, forced to surrender his fortune, and then turned over to the head of the emir's corps of freedmen, who had him beaten to death. His decapitated body was then exposed to the crowds.⁵⁵

Among the many creditors whom al-Lulyani left behind were some French merchants trading in Tunis. They sought redress with al-Mustansir, who gave them no satisfaction. Angered by his response, they complained to Louis IX, prompting, in Ibn Khaldun's telling, the French king to direct his crusade against Tunis. To forestall the king's attack, al-Mustansir sent an embassy to Paris with 80,000 pieces of gold "to assist their negotiations."⁵⁶ Louis took the money but told them he was going to direct his expedition against their country anyway.

Later Arabic authors picked up on Ibn Khaldun's story of bad debts and deals gone wrong. By the time the Hafsid historian Ibn al-Shamma' came to sum up the crusade in his *al-Adilla* (c.1456), the financial motives behind the campaign seemed clear-cut: "Their descent on Tunis aimed to seize the riches that the lord Abu Zakariya had bequeathed along

⁵⁴ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 658–9 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 354–5).

⁵⁵ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 655–6 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 350–2).

⁵⁶ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: 655–6 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: pp. 350–2).

with other wealth the sultan (al-Mustansir) had created after his father's death."⁵⁷

The Arabic sources have been criticized for misreading Louis's motives.⁵⁸ It is true that he was not likely to have diverted his long-planned expedition to deal with a counterfeiting crisis or settle a minor trade dispute. But the emphasis placed on money in these accounts is not off the mark. In pointing to French designs on Tunisian wealth, they align with the testimony of Geoffrey of Beaulieu, the royal intimate who always presented his master's motivations in the best possible light. Failing the re-Christianization of Ifriqiya, Tunis still made sense as a potentially lucrative stopover en route to Syria or Egypt. The late arrival of the Genoese fleet at Aigues-Mortes, which prevented Louis from entering the Mediterranean until July 1, had made it more likely that the expedition would have to halt for the winter in the central Mediterranean before embarking for its final destination the following spring. Stopping at Syracuse would have cost Louis and Charles money. Sacking Tunis would have turned that loss into a gain.

The Egyptian Strategy 2.0

In the late twelfth century, Saladin had brought Egypt and much of Syria and historical Palestine under his personal rule, including Jerusalem. The dynasty he founded—the Ayyubids—kept their capital at Cairo but continued to threaten what remained of the kingdom of Jerusalem from their Syrian bases. King Richard I of England considered striking against Ayyubid power at its Egyptian source. Although he opted to join the siege of Acre in the end, the Fifth Crusade would put this Egyptian strategy into effect in 1218, landing at Damietta, taking it after a long siege, and launching an expedition up the Nile.

Louis followed in the footsteps of the Fifth Crusaders on his first expedition. Once Damietta had fallen, his counselors debated two courses of action. One was to cross over to Alexandria, conquer it, and use it as a bargaining chip to regain Jerusalem. The other was to march to Cairo and take the Ayyubid capital. With the dynasty eliminated, the crusaders could reconquer Jerusalem and possibly the entire old kingdom up to its Jordan River border. Following his brother Robert of Artois's advice—"he who

⁵⁷ Ibn al-Shammaʿ, p. 73.

⁵⁸ Mohamed Talbi, "Saint Louis à Tunis," in *Les croisades*, ed. Robert Delort (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988), p. 77; Harry W. Hazard, "Moslem North Africa, 1049–1394," in *History of the Crusades*, vol. 3: p. 473.

wishes to kill the serpent must first crush the head"—Louis opted for the second course, with catastrophic results.⁵⁹

After nearly two decades of military expansion and internal consolidation, Mamluk Egypt was stronger than Ayyubid Egypt had ever been. Many European chroniclers, all basing themselves on a now lost common source, reported that Louis's plan for his second crusade was to attack Baybars's "citadel of Islam" indirectly, through an approach on his western flank. Al-Mustansir, according to these accounts, provided aid to Baybars and impeded transportation between western Europe and the Holy Land.⁶⁰ Geoffrey of Beaulieu also accused the emir of supplying military aid to the Mamluks "in the form of horses, arms, and warriors, to the distress and great harm of the Holy Land."⁶¹

It is tempting to dismiss these claims as rationalizations of an expedition gone wrong. Al-Mustansir was not as friendly with Baybars as the European chroniclers believed. We have no indication that he ever provided military assistance to the sultan. Nor was the emir an active opponent of the crusader states, which were, after all, thousands of miles from Hafsid Ifriqiya. The military operation envisioned in this plan, moreover, seems a better fit for the age of Montgomery and Rommel than it does for the medieval world of horses, crossbows, and sailing ships.⁶² Having taken Tunis, the crusaders would then have had to march or sail about 1,600 miles east just to reach Alexandria.

Faced with this logistical conundrum, a number of modern scholars have concluded that the Tunis Crusade was the result of a geographical error. The crusaders, it is claimed, thought that Tunis was a four-day journey by horse from Egypt.⁶³ But there are several reasons to doubt that Louis and his advisors were this confused. First, I have not found a medieval source that makes this claim. Second, Louis used Genoese crews and navigators, many of them on assignment from ships that regularly plied the routes between Genoa, Alexandria, and Tunis. These sailors must have had some idea of where the two African cities were in relation to each other. Third, Louis himself, while no one's idea of a

⁵⁹ Joinville, p. 254 (Smith, p. 190).

⁶⁰ Alberti Milioli *notarii regini liber de temporibus*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 31: p. 538; Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica fratris Salimbene de Adam ordinis minorum*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 32: pp. 483–4; anonymous continuator of Gerard Frachet, *Chronicon Girardi de Fracheto et anonyma eiusdem operis continuatio*, in *RHGF*, vol. 21: p. 5; Martini Oppaviensis *chronicon*, in *MGH SS*, vol. 22: p. 474; *Vita Clementis Papae IV*, ex *MSi Bernardi Guidonis*, in *RIS*, vol. 3, part 1: p. 596. On these chronicles, see Sternfeld, p. 378, and Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, pp. 168–9.

⁶¹ Geoffrey of Beaulieu, p. 22 (*Sanctity of Louis IX*, p. 118).

⁶² Sternfeld, p. 228; Mollat, p. 291; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, pp. 459, 546.

⁶³ Mollat, pp. 291–2.

seaman, had personal experience sailing around the Mediterranean from his first crusade and was therefore roughly aware of the distances involved.

Fourth, the Mamluks do not seem to have regarded the Tunisian landing as a miscalculation. All the Mamluk sources for the Tunis Crusade took seriously the possibility that Louis's ultimate objective was to attack Egypt. Ibn Wasil offered this crucial, though misdated, testimony:

He [Louis IX] continued to stay there [in his own country] until after the year 660 [November 1261–November 1262]. [Then] he gathered a copious host and planned to attack the lands of Islam a second time. But he was told that if he invaded Egypt what happened on the first occasion would befall him; and it was suggested to him that he should first attack Tunis in Ifriqiya (its king at that time was . . . al-Mustansir) . . . , and that if [Louis] defeated him and conquered Ifriqiya he would be in a position to invade Egypt by land and by sea, and would reduce it with ease.⁶⁴

Ibn Aybak al-Dawadari and al-Maqrizi both echoed this claim, stating that Louis raised an army to attack Damietta again but was persuaded by his officers to make for Tunis instead, because the capture of the one would facilitate the conquest of the other.⁶⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, an early biographer of Baybars, described the sultan's extensive precautions against a French return, including building bridges to facilitate troop movements, dispatching Bedouin auxiliaries based in Barqa to Tunis, digging wells along their line of march, and personally setting off for Ascalon, which he feared Louis might want to refortify.⁶⁶ These measures suggest that Baybars regarded Louis's expedition to Tunis as a threat to Mamluk Egypt.

In fact, no geographical error was required for Baybars and Louis to see Tunis as strategically important to their struggle with each other. The initial failure of Charles and al-Mustansir to establish peaceful relations implicated the central Mediterranean in the battle for Syria. The Hohenstaufen–Hafsid insurgency on Sicily made the island hard to use as a crusader base. Louis therefore had an interest in stabilizing Angevin control over the central Mediterranean, while Baybars would try to maintain the status quo. The Sicilian Straits are 40 miles across at their narrowest. The brothers could not have completely dominated maritime traffic through them had they conquered Tunis or converted it into a

⁶⁴ Ibn Wasil, p. 83. I am grateful to Peter Jackson for the English translation of this passage.

⁶⁵ Ibn Aybak al-Dawadari, *Kanz al-durar wa-jami' al-ghurar*, 9 vols (Cairo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1960–94), vol. 8 (ed. Ulrich Haarmann), p. 101; al-Maqrizi, vol. 1 (part 2): p. 502.

⁶⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 373–4.

Latin Christian client. But they certainly could have favored French and Provençal shipping, threatened Alexandria's commercial preeminence, reduced Ifriqiyan piracy, and made it easier for western European military aid to flow to the crusader states.

For Louis, the strategic dimensions of crusading were inextricably linked to an evangelical agenda. On his first crusade, he engaged in diplomacy with the Mongols to win converts and gain a military alliance, while he conquered Damietta to Christianize the city and open a path to Cairo. The Tunis Crusade combined these aspirations on a grander scale. Writing to the clergy of France not long after his father's death, Philippe III noted that:

[Louis] came to the port of Tunis and took it with no loss of his men, and he held this very renowned harbor, which lies at the entry to the land of Africa, which he intended, if God had granted him life, to dedicate to God by the increase of the Christian religion, and to expel the barbaric lineage of Saracens and eliminate their horrible filth.⁶⁷

To increase Christianity and expel the Muslims: Philippe's letter brought together conversion, conquest, and crusade into an ideology of elimination that achieved full expression outside Tunis in the summer of 1270.

The chilling grandeur of the old king's vision for the crusade is hard to reconcile with the careful calculations of his younger brother. With its enduring centrality to the Mediterranean-wide networks of conflict and collaboration that were crucial to the aspirations of both men, few places besides Tunis could have brought their divergent interests together so well.

⁶⁷ Primat, pp. 62–3.

7

After the Storm

Rupture and Stability in the Medieval Mediterranean

Charles of Anjou did not want to linger in North Africa. Within twenty-four hours of agreeing to the truce with al-Mustansir he was issuing orders for the withdrawal of the crusade. As a matter of the greatest urgency, he needed ships and sailors (500 of them) to come to Tunis to evacuate him and the rest of the army from their disease- and death-ridden camp. Many had come to believe that the camp was cursed, that the drinking water was fouled, and that no healthy person could survive there for long without succumbing to fever. With storm season approaching and a kingdom to run, Charles wanted out of there, now.¹

Leaving Tunis proved no less complicated than getting there in the first place. While Charles waited for the rescue fleet, more crusaders fell ill, including Thibaut of Navarre. More trouble came on November 10, in the form of Prince Edward of England. Edward had postponed his departure several times over the summer as he waited for his father, King Henry III, to decide whether he would join the campaign. After Henry accepted the advice of his counselors to stay home, Edward left Dover in the company of his brother Edmund on August 20. Once on the continent, Edward traced Louis's steps to Tunis, but at an even slower pace. He reached Aigues-Mortes only in late September, then sailed for Sardinia and stayed there for a month before finally crossing over to Tunis. He was in no rush to join this phase of the campaign.²

About ten days before Edward arrived, Charles had made him a party to the Treaty of Tunis without his consent, thereby committing him to an

¹ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 14, no. 44 (Lefevre, no. 253); *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 34, nos. 113–14 (Lefevre, nos. 255–6); Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the treasurer of Saint-Frambaud of Senlis, September 4, 1270," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 667.

² Reinhold Röhrich, "La croisade du Prince Édouard d'Angleterre (1270–1274)," *Archives de l'Orient latin* 1 (1881): p. 620.

agreement that excluded him from a share in the 210,000 gold ounce indemnity. It was a financially prudent move, but one that was bound to make things awkward once Edward arrived. There were longer-standing sources of tension between the two men as well. Charles was an ally of the Montforts, one of whom, Simon, had nearly overthrown Edward's father. Edward's mother was Eleanor of Provence, who believed that Charles had compromised her rights to Provence when he married her younger sister Beatrice. Edward's wife was Eleanor of Castile, sister not only of King Alfonso but also of Federico, who had been fighting Charles and now faced expulsion from Tunis, and Enrique, who was imprisoned back in the *Regno*. Frustrated as he was by these lingering issues and the unexpected turn the crusade had taken, there was little Edward could do to change the situation. He agreed to join Charles in Sicily to discuss the next steps for the campaign. On November 18, Charles issued him and his men a safe conduct for the duration of their stay on the island.³

The withdrawal began that day. Al-Mustansir sent down soldiers—Latin Christian and Muslim—to protect the crusaders while they broke camp. As the boats pushed off, those who looked back would have seen wooden siege engines littering the shore, built for an assault that never took place. Al-Mustansir had promised to preserve these and would prove good to his word. They were still there when Charles sent for them in 1273.⁴

The weather was calm for the crossing to Sicily. The first ships anchored off Trapani on Friday, November 21. Charles was rowed to shore in a galley the next day, followed shortly after by King Philippe III, Queen Isabelle, and their attendants. But on Saturday night strong winds began to pound the Sicilian coast, trapping those who were still on the boats. To some it seemed as if Neptune himself had taken charge of the storm, which intensified over Sunday and continued at peak intensity through Monday night. Anchors snapped, masts came crashing down, and some ships collided while others drifted into the open seas. Some vessels were driven back to Tunis, where al-Mustansir, holding to his agreement with the crusaders, allowed them to land and regroup before they tried again to return home. Eighteen of the larger ships sank, along with many smaller ones, perhaps up to a total of forty. Thousands of crusaders died.⁵

On Tuesday morning, November 25, the leading crusaders met to discuss their next steps. They agreed to return to their homes, raise

³ Sternfeld, pp. 279–83; *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 38, no. 128 (Lefevre, no. 266).

⁴ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, January 30, 1271," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: pp. 668–9; *RCA*, vol. 10: p. 51, no. 181 (Lefevre, no. 393).

⁵ Primat, pp. 82–3. Pierre of Condé ("Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, January 30, 1271") estimated the dead at 4,000, which is probably too high; Baybars's spies reported forty ships were sunk: Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 189, vol. 2: p. 149.

more money and recruit more troops, and then meet again in three years to resume their expedition to the Holy Land. Only Edward of England refused to go along with the plan. For the rest, it was a face-saving way of acknowledging the obvious: with the fleet destroyed and many of the footsoldiers drowned, there was no way they could continue. The crusade was over for the Angevins and Capetians.

The death toll continued to rise after the storm. Thibaut of Navarre died in Trapani from his illness. Philippe III carried on to Messina and crossed over to the mainland, heading north through Calabria. Near Cosenza his pregnant wife, Queen Isabelle, fell from her horse. She gave birth prematurely to a son who died shortly after being delivered. A few days later, she herself succumbed to her injuries and unbearable grief. On February 11, 1271, Philippe wrote to the abbot of Saint-Denis requesting prayers for the souls of his father Louis, his brother Jean Tristan, his brother-in-law Thibaut of Navarre, his wife Isabelle, and his baby son.⁶

A MOMENT OF RUPTURE

The Tunis Crusade nearly broke the Capetian dynasty. Their triumphant breeding record—the long line of kings who produced male heirs to succeed them for generation after generation—looked to be under threat as Philippe III led his funeral train back to Paris. Few at the time recognized the danger to the French monarchy. One of those who did was Ibn Khaldun. When the Franks returned to their lands, he wrote, their power and prestige waned and the vast kingdom of al-Francis (Louis) broke apart as the lords of the various provinces declared their independence. The royal house remained, but their era of domination had ended in failure and weakness. The Capetians would recover, of course, but that seemed a little less clear to a fourteenth-century North African intellectual than it does to us today.⁷

A near catastrophe for the Capetians, the crusade brought misery to many more besides. Thousands of the men and women Louis led overseas never returned to their homes, dying of disease or in battle. For the non-elite crusaders who had to wait for their betters to disembark, the storm off Trapani was more devastating still. Losses were heavy on the Tunisian side as well. The same diseases that devastated the crusader camp struck the

⁶ Pierre of Condé, "Letter to the prior of Argenteuil, January 30, 1271"; Philippe III, "Letter to the abbot and convent of Saint-Denis, February 11, 1271"; *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 669; Primat, pp. 84–7.

⁷ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 671 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 369).

city hard, leading to many deaths among its soldiers and civilians. The Tunis Crusade sowed devastation across all divisions of rank and religion.

OLD BONDS RENEWED AND NEW ONES FORMED: WESTERN ASIA

For Louis, the Capetians, ordinary French crusaders, and the many Ifriqiyans who died during the campaign, the Tunis Crusade was a tragedy. But that is not the whole story of the crusade. In many ways, and among many people, the Tunis Crusade stabilized interreligious relations in the Mediterranean.

About a week after the storm off Trapani, envoys from Baybars arrived at Charles's makeshift court there. Once again, the *hajib* Badr al-Din b. 'Aziz led the delegation. For the crusaders billeted around the city, it was another sign of how far their expedition had gone astray. Days after postponing the crusade, their leader was welcoming representatives of the sultan they had signed up to fight. In lavish fashion too: Charles assigned the ambassadors 1 gold ounce a day for expenses during their stay. When Baybars dispatched them, he did not know that the storm had already done much of their work for them: no negotiations would be necessary to keep the crusade out of the eastern Mediterranean. Charles, however, was in no hurry to send them back to Cairo. He still wanted a settlement with Mamluk Egypt that would preserve the status quo in the crusader states, protect the interests of Provençal and Sicilian merchants in Alexandria, and free him to intervene more assertively in the Aegean. The envoys would be his guests over the winter. In January 1271, they followed Charles to Messina, where he gave them luxurious gifts: a scarlet tunic lined with squirrel fur (highly prized in continental Europe) for the chief ambassador, and a blue robe lined with the fur of a desert fox (highly prized in the Islamic world) for his son. Bringing together European and Near Eastern fashions, the clothes gestured toward the Angevin–Frankish–Mamluk rapprochement that Charles wanted to achieve.⁸

Sending ambassadors to Charles was one facet of Baybars's evolving response to the crusade. When the sultan learned of Louis's death in September 1270, he had recalled the troops he had sent to help al-Mustansir. He remained concerned, though, that the crusader fleet could redeploy in the eastern Mediterranean. A likely landing spot was Ascalon, which had

⁸ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 198, vol. 2: p. 157; *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 159, no. 819 (Lefevre, no. 279); Sternfeld, p. 349 (appendix A, no. 34); for the symbolism behind the gifts, see Borghese, p. 172.

parts of its walls and some of the old citadel standing, along with a viable harbor. On September 25, Baybars went up to the settlement and supervised the destruction of its fortifications and the spiking of its harbor with rocks and tree-trunks.

Once it was clear that no crusade was coming east right away and that Charles was intent on negotiating with his envoys, Baybars could resume his offensive against the crusader states. He targeted the great castles of the north—Chastel Blanc (Safita), Crac des Chevaliers (Hisn al-Akrad), and Gibelacar (Hisn 'Akkar)—that the military orders garrisoned. On January 24, 1271, he set off on the familiar journey north from Cairo. He stopped near Chastel Blanc, the Templar stronghold that protected the eastern approaches to the county of Tripoli. At first the knights thought about resisting the Mamluk siege, but the Templar commander of nearby Tortosa convinced them that it was better to try for a negotiated surrender: given the shortage of fighting men in Frankish Syria, their lives were more valuable to the order than the real estate. The knights of Chastel Blanc accepted this argument and Baybars allowed the 700-strong garrison to withdraw in return for the castle.

From Chastel Blanc, Baybars advanced to Crac des Chevaliers, the seemingly impregnable Hospitaller stronghold that lay on the northeastern frontier of the county of Tripoli and projected Frankish power toward Homs and Hama. The siege began on February 21. By mid-March, the Mamluks had seized the outer ring of defenses. The Hospitaller knights retreated to the keep and prepared to hold out for as long as they could. Recalling the appeal of the Templars of Tortosa to their colleagues at Chastel Blanc, Baybars devised a ruse to speed things along. He forged a letter from the Hospitaller commander in Tripoli ordering the castle's surrender and had it delivered to the keep. On April 8, whether out of respect for this bogus command or mere prudence, the knights withdrew from this most famous of crusader castles and marched to Tripoli. Once there, the Hospitallers sued for peace and were granted it; the Templars of Tortosa did the same.

Three weeks later, on April 29, Baybars invested Gibelacar, which belonged to Bohemond VI of Tripoli (and lately of Antioch). Here, the sultan relied on heavy weaponry rather than subterfuge. To demonstrate his commitment to the cause, he mucked in with his men as they dug out and flattened paths to haul the siege artillery into position. Once the mangonels were in place, they launched a barrage that reduced part of the eastern wall to rubble. The garrison surrendered on May 12 and joined the stream of refugees flowing into Tripoli.⁹

⁹ For Baybars's conquests in the spring of 1271, see Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 371–88; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 180–92; vol. 2: pp. 142–52; and Thorau, pp. 204–6.

Baybars was advancing on the city when news reached him that Edward of England had landed in Acre with a fleet of eight sailing ships and thirty galleys, carrying 300 knights. In fact, he may have had fewer troops at his disposal than the sultan's spies estimated. The Treaty of Tunis had barred Edward from attacking Tunis, but he had reserved the right to fulfill his crusade vow in the Holy Land. By the spring of 1270, as a fresh sailing season opened, Charles of Anjou was no longer as interested in keeping Edward away from Syria. Baybars's victories in the north had reduced Charles's negotiating power; Edward might be able to tilt the balance back in his favor. Baybars's first response to the expedition's arrival suggested that Charles might be on to something. The sultan stopped his army short of Tripoli and sent a peace embassy to Bohemond VI, who accepted a ten-year truce.

In April 1271, the Egyptian envoys left the *Regno*.¹⁰ Joining them were the Angevin envoys Pietro of Beanes and Brother Berenger, the Dominican chaplain who had served the king on previous diplomatic missions to Cairo and Tunis.¹¹ Their goals were the same ones that Charles had been pursuing in his negotiations with Baybars for the past three years: protection for Angevin merchants trading in Alexandria and a truce for the kingdom of Jerusalem. If Edward's campaign could place some pressure on Baybars, Charles's ambassadors would be on hand to take advantage.¹²

Once the sultan had neutralized Bohemond VI and secured his northern conquests, he turned to confront the new crusade in the south. His approach was typically multifaceted. Since Hugh of Lusignan, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, had joined up with Edward in Acre, Baybars launched a naval attack on Cyprus in June 1271 to try to draw the king away from the mainland. To deceive the Cypriot Franks, the Mamluk galleys flew flags with crosses and wore black paint like Frankish vessels. The disguise did not get the chance to work, because the galleys lost their way in a storm off Limassol and foundered during the night on the reefs near the coast. About 1,800 Mamluk sailors and soldiers fell into captivity. It was a rare military setback for Baybars.

Back on dry land, it was a more familiar story. In mid-June 1271, Baybars assembled his siege artillery at Safad for an assault on nearby

¹⁰ *RCA*, vol. 6: no. 911.

¹¹ Lefevre, nos. 330–2; Borghese, p. 173.

¹² For Edward's arrival in the Holy Land and Charles's embassy to Baybars, see: *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 175, no. 911 (Lefevre, no. 327), *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 128, no. 620 (Lefevre, no. 330), *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 176, no. 913 (Lefevre, no. 331), *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 217, no. 1162 (Lefevre, no. 332); Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 389; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 190, 196, vol. 2: pp. 150, 154; Röhrich, "Croisade du Édouard," pp. 622–3; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071–c.1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 432–3.

Montfort (al-Qarn), the main fortress of the Teutonic Knights in the crusader states. It was a linchpin of the Frankish defenses, guarding the northeastern approaches to Acre. Baybars offered money to anyone who was willing to claw out the stones of the lower walls of the fortress by hand. Many soldiers volunteered for the dangerous work and by the end of the month Montfort was his.¹³

Restricted by his small army, Edward did not intervene. He did, however, contact the Ilkhan Abaqa to revive the Mongol alliance that seemed to have collapsed when Louis IX died. In July, perhaps when Baybars had returned to Cairo, Edward launched his first operations. These were small-scale raids on Seisor (al-Shaghur) and Saint George de Lebeyne (al-Bi'na). The mission had to be cut short when many of the English crusaders became sick in the unfamiliar summer heat. Edward led everyone back to Acre to recuperate. He lost another potential ally when Jean of Montfort negotiated a separate peace with Baybars later that summer.¹⁴

In November, Edward tried again, and this time the prospects seemed brighter. The weather was cooler, his brother Edmund had brought reinforcements, and Mongol forces loyal to Abaqa were ready to advance from the north. Louis's dream of a multipronged invasion of Mamluk Syria was about to come true.

Abaqa's chief commander in eastern Anatolia was Samaghar, *noyan* of the *noyans*. With reinforcements from the Seljuk sultanate, led by the chief minister (*perwaneh*) Mu'in al-Din Sulayman, Samaghar entered the territory around 'Ayn Tab.¹⁵ The combined forces sacked the city and moved south toward Harran.¹⁶ As chance would have it, Baybars was closer to their line of operations than they thought. In late September 1271, he had secretly traveled north from Cairo to confront rebel Bedouin tribes around Hama. After calling for more troops from Cairo, the sultan marched north to Aleppo. As it turned out, his help was hardly needed. Al-Hajj Taybars al-Waziri, the emir dispatched to protect Harran, confronted and scattered the Ilkhanate-Seljuk invaders. When Baybars himself brought his larger force out of Aleppo, they retired back to Anatolia.

As al-Waziri dealt with the Mongols, Edward of England rallied his followers for a raid in the south. The target was Caco (Qaqun), a fortified

¹³ For the naval expedition to Cyprus and the conquest of Montfort, see: Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 384–90; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 191–5, vol. 2: pp. 151–4; *Templare di Tiro*, p. 138 (Crawford, p. 67); Thorau, pp. 206–7.

¹⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 390; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 196, vol. 2: p. 155; Thorau, pp. 207, 222; Röhrich, "Croisade du Édouard," p. 623; Richard, "Croisade de 1270," pp. 520–1; Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 167–8.

¹⁵ Now Gaziantep, Turkey.

¹⁶ Near modern-day Altınbaşak, Turkey.

town not too far from Caesarea that Baybars had taken from the Franks in an earlier campaign. On November 23, 1271, Edward and his fellow crusaders, joined by Hugh of Cyprus and Jerusalem, set off from Acre. Heading south and slightly inland, they proceeded cautiously, marching mostly at night. When they came upon a Turcoman camp, they attacked it, killing many and taking 500 head of cattle as plunder. Soon after, Mamluk contingents mobilized from 'Ayn Jalut intercepted the crusaders, took back the cattle, and drove them back to Acre.¹⁷

Without confronting either personally, Baybars had beaten back the Mongols and crusaders in turn. When he returned to Cairo, he set to work replacing the galleys he had lost off Limassol. Charles of Anjou's envoys—Brother Berenger and Pietro of Beanes—met with him down at the shipyards. The sight of Baybars working among the beams and timbers, surrounded by emirs and shipwrights, was meant to project strength and determination, but it also hinted at a certain vulnerability. His precious fleet, built at great effort and expense, was gone, and the European powers retained their naval superiority. Under these circumstances, it made sense to conciliate Charles in order to keep Angevin naval power out of Syrian waters and encourage Marseillais and Sicilian trade in Alexandria. What Charles wanted, as his ambassadors made clear, was a peace treaty for Acre.¹⁸

Pressure on Baybars to settle with the Franks was coming from other directions as well. Abaqa had not taken part in the recent attack on northern Syria because he had been dealing with the Chaghadayid khan Baraq's incursions across his eastern frontiers. By 1272, that threat appeared to be receding, opening the way for Abaqa to confront the Mamluks more directly. Consequently, Baybars took the news of a fresh Ilkhanate invasion into Upper Mesopotamia seriously when it reached him in the spring of 1272. On March 5, he led his army out of Cairo. When he reached Caesarea and stopped to pasture the horses, he was still uncertain about the scale of the Mongol operation. It was at this opportune moment that an envoy from Hugh of Cyprus and Jerusalem arrived in the Mamluk camp and asked to negotiate a truce.

The Franks asked for Saffran (Shafar'am), Cabor (Kabul), and Scandelion (Iskandaruna). After several weeks of discussions, Baybars conceded Saffran and agreed to share Cabor and Scandelion. The Frankish peasants who had worked the land around these towns would be allowed to return. The Franks also regained the plain of Acre and control over the pilgrimage

¹⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, pp. 396–7; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 197, vol. 2: p. 155; *Templare di Tiro*, p. 140 (Crawford, pp. 67–8); Thorau, p. 209; Richard, *Crusades*, p. 433.

¹⁸ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 198, vol. 2: 156–7.

road to Nazareth. On these terms, Hugh and Baybars confirmed a ten-year, ten-month, ten-day, and ten-hour peace on April 21, 1272, which is traditionally known as the Treaty of Caesarea. With some help from the Ilkhanate and Charles of Anjou, the Franks and the Mamluks entered a new era of coexistence.¹⁹

Edward of England did not sign the Treaty of Caesarea. Like his crusader patron Louis IX, he favored an aggressive approach to the battle for Syria. He refused to make peace with Baybars and talked about staying around to keep up the fight. Baybars had once been as committed to the conflict as Louis and Edward, but the Treaty of Caesarea represented a shift in approach. While most of Baybars's truces with the Franks had been punitive, this one granted them modest concessions. His willingness to settle on these terms was partly a response to Angevin and Ilkhanate pressure, but the degraded Frankish threat was also a factor. Now that he had reduced the Frankish presence to a few vulnerable coastal settlements, he could turn aside from his conflict with them and pivot toward the Ilkhanate, which remained an existential menace to the Mamluk project. If only, that is, he could do something about Edward.

Baybars liked to say that he could use the dagger as well as the sword.²⁰ In May 1272, he set the governor of Ramla, Ibn Shawar, to work on the English prince. The governor sent an Assassin to Acre, who approached Edward in the guise of an ordinary Muslim soldier seeking baptism. Yet again, the conversion gambit would be tried. It is not clear if Edward knew what had happened to Jean of Brienne at Carthage, or Philippe of Montfort in his chapel. In any case, the "soldier" soon gave Edward another reason—beyond, that is, his sudden passion for Christianity—to keep him around. Posing as a double agent as well as a convert, he fed the crusaders false intelligence about Baybars and his plans. He became familiar enough to Edward's guards that he was able to talk his way past them into Edward's bedroom one night and stab him multiple times. Edward recuperated from his injuries after a couple of weeks, but his days as a crusader were over. He sailed for Italy in September. With a cold act of violence, made possible by a feigned conversion, Baybars had preserved the peace. If a single episode could epitomize the Tunis Crusade, this would be it.²¹

¹⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 398; Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 199–200, vol. 2: 157–8; Richard, "Croisade de 1270," pp. 520–1; Thorau, pp. 209–10; Röhrich, "Croisade du Édouard," p. 624.

²⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 395; Thorau, p. 208.

²¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir, p. 401; *Templare di Tiro*, p. 140 (Crawford, pp. 68–9).

OLD BONDS RENEWED AND NEW ONES FORMED:
THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

Sometime in late 1271, between seeing off the Anglo-Mongol attacks and signing the Treaty of Caesarea, Baybars received an embassy from al-Mustansir of Tunis. The emir gave the sultan a present: twenty-five horses, two of which were reputed to be the fastest in Tunis. Baybars was not impressed. He gave the horses to his emirs and complained that al-Mustansir had not addressed him by his proper titles. Now that the crisis of the crusade had passed, old tensions were surfacing again. Baybars responded to al-Mustansir's gifts with a nasty critique. The emir was guilty of evil actions. Rather than fighting Franks like he should, he hired them to fight Muslims. During the Tunis Crusade, he had refused to enter the battlefield, remaining hidden away even after Louis had died. He was guilty, in other words, of inverting the norms of Islamic rulership, which called for confronting rather than collaborating with the infidel. "One such as you," the sultan thundered, "was not fit to have charge of the affairs of Muslims."²²

The contrast Baybars drew between himself and al-Mustansir was overdrawn, but not by much. When necessary, Baybars made peace with the Franks and al-Mustansir waged jihad against them. In general, though, Baybars was right to say that al-Mustansir's approach to the non-Muslim world was more open and accommodating than his. The difference had to do in part with their respective positions in relation to Europeans: Baybars faced a fractured Frankish presence that had grown isolated from its European homeland, while al-Mustansir had to deal with assertive European powers—Angevins, Aragonese, and Italian maritime republics—in their own backyards. Just as important, though, in shaping their approach to interreligious relations were the internal dynamics of Mamluk Egypt and Hafsid Ifriqiya. As a revolutionary interloper, Baybars founded his regime on defending Sunni orthodoxy at home through a campaign of moral regeneration and abroad through relentless holy war. The Franks made a perfect foil for this performance of Mamluk self-legitimation. Al-Mustansir, by contrast, faced centrifugal forces within Ifriqiya so powerful that he had little choice but to look outward for support. Hafsid state-building in his era was externally oriented: foreign mercenary soldiers and foreign trade were indispensable foundations of dynastic consolidation. So while good relations with Baybars were

²² Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: p. 198, vol. 2: p. 156.

desirable, they ultimately mattered less than the central Mediterranean networks of exchange into which the Tunis Crusade had interposed itself. While the crusade had brought an unlikely peace to Syria, it remained to be seen what impact it might have on the central Mediterranean.

Al-Mustansir survived, and even thrived, in the wake of the Tunis Crusade. Although Baybars may have disapproved, al-Mustansir expressed no regret about what he had done during the campaign. He breezily informed his counterparts in the central and western Maghreb that he had saved the Muslims by concluding a peace with the crusaders. He collected the indemnity he owed to the crusader kings without a struggle and destroyed what remained of the fortifications at Carthage so no future expedition could use them as a base.²³

The expedition accelerated rather than halted the political consolidation that was already under way by the time Louis landed on the *halq al-Wadi*. After crushing the Banu Mas'ud in 1268–9, al-Mustansir used the occasion of the crusade to rally other disaffected elements to the regime. This was especially true in the contested lands west of Tunis. Abu Hilal-Iyad, governor of Bijaya, proved his loyalty by bringing troops, as did Abu Zayyan Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Qawi, leader of the Banu Tujin, the Zenata Berber rivals to the 'Abd al-Wadids of Tlemcen.

In the mid-1270s, a revolt in Algiers allowed al-Mustansir to go on the offensive again. He assembled a coalition of loyalists, including soldiers from Tunis, a naval squadron, and, in a sign of his newfound influence in the west, troops from Bijaya led by Abu al-'Abbas b. Abi al-A'lam. Blockaded by land and sea, Algiers fell to the Hafsid assault in 1274–5. The emir's men dealt with the city harshly, killing, raping, pillaging, and conducting the leaders of the rebellion back to Tunis in chains.²⁴

This violent assertion of internal control depended on peaceful external relations, which al-Mustansir cultivated with great success after the Tunis Crusade. He paid the tribute he owed to Charles of Anjou regularly, a transaction that was far from straightforward in the thirteenth-century Mediterranean. In the fall of 1271, Charles assigned a traveling party to collect the tribute that included three notables of Messina, one of Palermo, and no less a figure than Philippe of Toucy, admiral of the *Regno*. Accompanying Philippe was a clerk seconded from the master of the mint of Brindisi, whose job was to verify the weight and quality of the currency.²⁵ Collection procedures were no less elaborate in subsequent

²³ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: p. 671 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 369).

²⁴ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 674–5 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 372).

²⁵ *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 240, no. 1284 (Lefevre, no. 345); *RCA*, vol. 6: p. 256, no. 1376 (Lefevre, no. 348); *RCA*, vol. 7: p. 221, no. 57 (Lefevre, no. 353); *RCA*, vol. 7: p. 210, n. 192 (Lefevre, no. 355); *RCA*, vol. 7: p. 185, no. 83 (Lefevre, no. 360).

years. In September 1272, Philippe of Toucy sent three galleys, with full Sicilian crews, to collect the tribute. The mission was treated as a formal diplomatic embassy, with two high-ranking Angevin officials—Adam Morier, vicar-general of Sicily, and Roberto Infante, the justiciar—assigned to lead it.²⁶ The tribute was not cheap to collect. In 1276, the Angevin treasury estimated the cost of a recent delivery at 1,385 gold ounces.²⁷ The transactions were generally smooth. The only issue was the emir's tendency to want to pay in silver coinage rather than gold.²⁸

In return for the tribute, Charles honored his obligations under the Treaty of Tunis as well. The agreement had banned piracy between Hafsid and Angevin subjects. Charles's officials on Malta apparently did not get the memo. In the summer of 1271, al-Mustansir complained that pirates based on the island were preying on Tunisian shipping. Angevin officials ordered the castellan of Malta to forbid the outlaws from docking in the harbor.²⁹ Charles was not interested in suppressing piracy altogether, just attacks on Tunis and other allies. In 1275, he made Provençal pirates swear an oath and sign a written instrument to the effect "that they . . . should not harm that magnificent man the king of Tunis, our tributary and an ally to us, his vassals or other friends of ours."³⁰ Later that year, the king's men arrested a pirate and compelled him to release the Tunisians he had captured.³¹

In addition to freedom from attacks by sea, Tunisian subjects were also entitled to security for their persons and goods while visiting Angevin lands. In accordance with this provision, the Angevin curia restored personal property to a certain Musa, "a Saracen of Tunis," in 1272.³²

Musa may have been an Ifriqiyan merchant working in Sicily. A key benefit of the Treaty of Tunis for all parties was the restoration of trade across the Sicilian Straits. Sicilian merchants were active again in Tunisian markets by 1272, and probably had been for some time before that. By 1275, the volume of commercial traffic was high enough to warrant the opening of a Sicilian *funduk* in Tunis.³³ Crucially, wheat was a main driver of this revived exchange. In late December 1275, Charles granted

²⁶ *RCA*, vol. 9: p. 29, no. 39 (Lefevre, no. 377); *RCA*, vol. 10: pp. 213–14, no. 3 (Lefevre, no. 378).

²⁷ *RCA*, vol. 13: p. 131, no. 440 (Lefevre, no. 420).

²⁸ *RCA*, vol. 10: p. 212, no. 1 (Lefevre, no. 380).

²⁹ *RCA*, vol. 7: p. 221, no. 54 (Lefevre, no. 351).

³⁰ Sternfeld, p. 352 (appendix A, no. 38).

³¹ *RCA*, vol. 13: p. 74, no. 132 (Lefevre, no. 404).

³² *RCA*, vol. 8: p. 79, no. 315 (Lefevre, no. 369).

³³ *RCA*, vol. 13: p. 32, no. 139 (Lefevre, no. 412); *RCA*, vol. 13: p. 167, no. 471 (Lefevre, no. 413).

commercial licenses to export wheat to Tunis and Bijaya, and in the same month we find Sicilian merchants documenting their North African trade in the commodity.³⁴ The essential mechanism of interaction between Sicily and Ifriqiya—the exchange of wheat for gold—was back in place.

Peace with Angevin Sicily did not curtail al-Mustansir's relations with other Mediterranean powers, even with those Charles called his enemies. In effect, the emir accepted the financial implications of his tributary status, but not the political. After the crusade, al-Mustansir moved to restore his relationships with the Italian maritime republics and the Crown of Aragon.

The crusaders and the Ifriqiyans had hardly laid down their weapons when interreligious commerce resumed. As soon as peace was declared, Tunisians came down to the crusader camp to sell food and gawk at the beautiful horses and fancy armor of the French magnates. More familiar patterns of commercial exchange reestablished themselves as well. The Pisans returned to Bijaya, which they had fled during the summer. The Venetians agreed to a new treaty of peace and commerce with the Hafsids in June 1271. The terms remained largely unchanged from their agreement of twenty years before, except that the length of the truce was now set at a confidence-inducing forty years.³⁵

The situation with the Genoese was more complicated. They had not chosen Tunis as the target of the crusade. Back home, the diversion was unpopular. It was widely believed that “nothing good” would come from crusading to Tunis. Even so, Genoese sailors and marines had played an active role in the campaign, sailing the fleet to Cagliari and Tunis, then leading the successful attack on Carthage. On the arrival of the fleet off Tunis, al-Mustansir had taken Genoese merchants working in the city into custody. He seems to have been more interested in protecting them than punishing them—he put them up in the royal palace complex, after all—but the fact remained that he had taken away their freedom for a number of months.³⁶

As it turned out, the Hafsids and the Genoese were able to put the crusade behind them with little fuss. Within two months of the Treaty of Tunis, the Genoese were trading in Ifriqiya again. On January 5, 1271, a Genoese crusader stranded in Trapani after the storm contracted two loans with colleagues. Jacobo Cibo borrowed money from Montanino of Camilla and

³⁴ *RCA*, vol. 13: p. 91, no. 207 (Lefevre, no. 411); *RCA*, vol. 13: pp. 30–1, no. 137 (Lefevre, no. 409).

³⁵ Primat, p. 82; *Gesta Ludovici*, p. 478; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 65; *Traité*s, pp. 203–6.

³⁶ *Annali Genovesi*, pp. 131–4.

Venturino of Pavia, which Jacobo promised to pay back within nine days of landing in Tunis.³⁷ The crusader had become a merchant once again.

The normalization of Hafsid–Genoese relations was marked by a treaty of November 6, 1272. Valid for ten years, the agreement repeated many provisions of the treaty of 1250 between the two maritime powers. There were, however, some subtle changes that could reflect the experience of the crusade. Echoing the currency disputes to which al-Yunini alluded in his account of the expedition, one new clause in the 1272 treaty required the Genoese to bring only legitimate currency to Tunis, in coinage of “good fine silver.” Customs officials would seize any counterfeit money they brought into Hafsid domains. Another provision forbade the Genoese from housing “foreigners” (i.e., non-Genoese) in their *funduk*: perhaps this had been a source of misunderstanding when the Genoese were taken into custody. In return for these security measures, the head of the customs house of Tunis, Abu al-Hasan Yahya b. ‘Abd al-Malik, who was the chief Hafsid negotiator, offered a trade concession: the Genoese would not pay duty on goods sold to other Christians in Tunis. Under the impetus of this agreement, Hafsid–Genoese commerce flourished again. In 1275, as the Angevins established their *funduk* in Tunis, the Genoese opened a second *funduk* of their own to house their growing expatriate community.³⁸

The Hafsid–Genoese rapprochement was strong enough to withstand Charles’s attempt to derail it in 1273, when he declared war on the Genoese and called on al-Mustansir to honor the “enemies” clause of the Treaty of Tunis by expelling them from Ifriqiyan markets. Relations between the *Regno* and Genoa had been fragile since the Angevin accession in 1266. Charles and the Genoese had agreed to a truce in August 1269, but it did not survive the Tunis Crusade. On October 28, 1270, while Charles and the Genoese crusaders were camping together outside Carthage, the Ghibelline faction in Genoa seized power from their Guelf rivals. Oberto Spinola and Oberto Doria jointly assumed the office of podestà. The danger the crusade seemed to pose to Genoese trade with Tunis and to Genoese nationals in the city may have stoked popular anger that contributed to the Guelf downfall. The storm off Trapani gave Charles an easy way of punishing the city-state for turning against his allies. On December 2, 1270, he asserted an “ancient custom” of the kingdom of Sicily according to which everything recovered from a shipwreck along its shores, which was not claimed by its owners within three

³⁷ Alberto M. Boldorini, *Da Tunisi a Trapani con i Genovesi alla seconda crociata di Luigi IX (1270–1)* (Siena: Università degli studi di Siena, 1967), nos. 18–19.

³⁸ *Traités*, pp. 118–25; Brunschvig, vol. 1: p. 66.

days, belonged to the treasury. Shortly after, he made an exception for the goods of his nephew Philippe III and the other French crusaders, leaving only Genoese property liable to confiscation.³⁹

The Genoese protested, but to no effect. Over the next two years, the Tyrrhenian coast of the *Regno* came under heavy attack from Genoese privateers. As Charles assembled a coalition to make war on the republic in spring 1273, he looked to his Hafsîd ally for support. He asked al-Mustansîr to expel the Genoese from Tunis and provide a base for the Marseillais pirate Raymond of Guben while he harried Genoese shipping in the Sicilian Straits.⁴⁰ The requests came at an awkward time for al-Mustansîr, who had signed his commercial treaty with the Genoese only the previous December. Once again, he risked being dragged into the Ghibelline–Guelf conflict. His solution on this occasion was elegant. He ignored Charles’s political demands and continued to pay him the tribute. With Charles happy to accept this trade-off, al-Mustansîr was able to remain neutral in the Angevin–Genoese conflict while profiting from trade with both parties.

Al-Mustansîr managed a similar balancing act with another of Charles’s Mediterranean rivals: the Crown of Aragon. After returning from his failed attempt to reach the Holy Land, Jaume I of Aragon had watched his former crusade coalition turn against a trade partner. The diplomatic implications of the diversion were not lost on him either. With Charles on one side and Federico of Castile on the other, the conflict had more than a tinge of Angevin–Hohenstaufen rivalry to it. Jaume’s loyalties were clear, and they did not lie with his fellow crusaders. When a Catalan mercenary in al-Mustansîr’s service named Gonzalvo Pérez of Alcoba went home to recruit reinforcements in September 1270, Jaume had the dean of the cathedral of Valencia cover the wages of the twelve knights who returned with Gonzalvo to Tunis to fight the crusaders.⁴¹ Despite this support, Jaume could only look on as al-Mustansîr made peace with Charles to end the crusade. For the emir, settling with Charles solved one problem but created another: it might suggest to Jaume that he was going over to the Angevin–Capetian–Guelf axis and leaving his Ghibelline–Hohenstaufen–Aragonese friends behind.

To limit the collateral damage the Treaty of Tunis might do to Hafsîd–Aragonese relations, al-Mustansîr sent a diplomatic mission to Jaume in late 1270. Working quickly, the emir’s envoys negotiated the first

³⁹ *RCA*, vol. 10: p. 21, no. 78 (Lefevre, no. 389); *RCA*, vol. 6: pp. 157–8, no. 816 (Lefevre, no. 276); Sternfeld, pp. 293–7; Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 156.

⁴⁰ Borghese, p. 142.

⁴¹ *L’Espagne catalane*, p. 121.

Hafsid–Aragonese treaty of peace and commerce that has come down to us, which was sealed at Valencia on February 14, 1271. Conceived of as a counterstroke to the Treaty of Tunis, the agreement echoed many of its provisions. There are guarantees for the personal security of merchants and other travelers between the two realms, along with prohibitions against piracy and the right of shipwreck. Relations between Jaume and al-Mustansir would not always be smooth in future years. A dispute in 1274, for example, led to Jaume briefly banning Catalan trade with Ifriqiya. But the Treaty of Valencia provided an enduring framework for resolving conflicts. Ambassadors and gifts would be exchanged, and normal commercial relations would resume.⁴² Consequently, and unlike most Mediterranean dynasts, al-Mustansir could regard both the houses of Anjou and Aragon as allies in the years following the Tunis Crusade. Thanks to some deft maneuvering, Hafsid Ifriqiya had not fallen into the sphere of influence of any European power as a result of the expedition. Paradoxically enough, the Sicilian tribute proved crucial to carving out this freedom of action. So long as Charles received his money, al-Mustansir could retain maximum latitude in his dealings with other Mediterranean powers. The dependent status of a tributary bought the emir a broader independence that was precious indeed.

With foreign and domestic stability largely achieved, the last years of al-Mustansir's reign were calm. Ibn Khaldun would describe them with more than a touch of nostalgia as a time of leisure for the emir in his gardens and on the hunt. For the historian, it was a golden age of Hafsid rule. While al-Andalus suffered loss after loss, the Abbasid caliphate was falling to the Mongols, the Almohads were giving way to the Marinids, and "al-Francis's" kingdom was shattering:

Their [i.e., the Hafsid] *dawla* increased in power, greatness, prosperity, population, solidarity, and military force; the people of the world looked to him.⁴³

In the Khaldunian cycle of dynastic rise and decline, such a peak could only mean one thing: a period of decadence beckoned for the ruling cadre. The project of dynastic consolidation and political centralization that al-Mustansir had pursued would in fact experience serious setbacks in the years following his death in 1277. New configurations of politics and power would take shape, posing profound challenges to the model of the

⁴² *Traités*, pp. 280–4; *L'Espagne catalane*, pp. 123–30. Dufourcq exaggerates Hafsid dependence on the Crown of Aragon in this period.

⁴³ Ibn Khaldun, vol. 6: pp. 674–5 (*Histoire des Berbères*, vol. 2: p. 374).

regional emirate that the old emir had championed. Local forces of autonomy, in Bijaya and elsewhere, would emerge and thrive.⁴⁴ But all that lay in the future. For the time being, al-Mustansir had brought balance to the external and internal forces that shaped his approach to governance.

MEDITERRANEAN DIFFERENCE AND MEDITERRANEAN DIVERSITY

The Tunis Crusade strengthened and stabilized Mediterranean networks of interreligious interaction. In the east, Baybars carried out further conquests but also agreed to five treaties with Frankish authorities: King Hugh of Cyprus and Jerusalem, Bohemond VI of Tripoli, Jean of Montfort, the Hospitallers, and the Templars. Peace with the Franks also improved Baybars's relationship with Charles of Anjou, allowing each to pause the battle for Syria and turn to more pressing confrontations with the Ilkhanate and Byzantium respectively. In the central and western Mediterranean, al-Mustansir signed four treaties with northern Mediterranean powers, which reaffirmed old bonds with the *Regno*, Venice, Genoa, and the Crown of Aragon, while creating new ones with the kingdoms of France, Navarre, and England.

These treaties had broad commercial implications. Across the Mediterranean, merchants in Alexandria, Marseille, Palermo, Acre, Tunis, Bijaya, and Barcelona could look forward to a revival of trade. An ironic consequence of the crusade amplified the benefits of these renewed economic ties. On August 22, 1270, in Cremona, the Italian maritime republics settled their long-standing grievances in a comprehensive treaty.⁴⁵ Louis IX had been working toward this goal for years and felt, like many other crusade enthusiasts of his era, that it was essential to the survival of the crusader states. After several failed attempts, his mediators had finally brought Venice and Pisa, on one side, and Genoa, on the other, together to resolve their differences, ostensibly for the sake of the crusade. By the time the deal was made, however, Louis was on his sickbed outside Carthage. He was too far from Syria, and too close to death, to gain an advantage in his war against Baybars. Instead, the agreement promoted commercial exchange across the religious barriers that the king had sacrificed his life to reinforce.

The Tunis Crusade brought a certain degree of political and economic order to the Mediterranean world. It did not achieve this by imposing

⁴⁴ Roughi, pp. 37–54.

⁴⁵ Sternfeld, pp. 339–46 (appendix A, no. 27).

religious uniformity on the region. Louis did not Christianize North Africa or embrace Islam for France on his deathbed. The region remained religiously plural. Nor did the expedition promote stability by blending religious identities. Christians remained Christians after the crusade, and Muslims remained Muslims. Nor did the crusade foster peaceful relations by enabling secular ambitions to trump religious scruples.

In fact, religion as an organizing principle of personal identity mattered a great deal to many of those involved in the crusade. Religious identification structured post-crusade commercial relations among the combatants in powerful ways. The Hafsids treaties with the *Regno*, Genoa, and the Crown of Aragon delineated the rights of travelers and merchants not only as subjects of a prince or citizens of a republic, but also as Muslims and Christians. The conversion gambit at the heart of the crusade depended on the idea that allegiances of faith were changeable, certainly; but it also hinged on the shared assumption that religious identification was fundamental to negotiating other kinds of relations—diplomatic, economic, and personal. Otherwise, why bother with it? If al-Mustansir dangled the prospect of conversion before Louis, it was because the emir believed that it would create a strong enough connection between them that the king would intercede with his own brother to stop an attack on Tunis. If Louis took al-Mustansir's proposition seriously, it was because the king deeply desired the salvation of the emir's soul. In the long run, al-Mustansir's conversion might have benefited the crusader states; but even if it did not, it still would have represented a triumph for the king's vision of a more profoundly Christianized world.

The Tunis Crusade witnessed powerful assertions of religious difference. While making the long journey back to France, Philippe III wrote that Louis's aim in North Africa had been to "extirpate from the roots the errors of the infidel Saracens there."⁴⁶ This ideology of elimination found a match in Baybars's depictions of Mamluk soldiers breaking crosses, smashing altars, and killing monks during the sack of Antioch.⁴⁷ The pair of dynasts more inclined to accommodation could use this kind of language when they needed to as well. Al-Mustansir called for jihad against the Frankish invaders, while Charles spoke of exerting himself for the exaltation of the Christian faith against the Saracens of North Africa.⁴⁸ At the same time,

⁴⁶ Philippe III, "Letter to the abbot and convent of Saint-Denis, February 11, 1271," in *Spicilegium*, vol. 3: p. 669.

⁴⁷ Ibn al-Furat, vol. 1: pp. 157–8, vol. 2: p. 124.

⁴⁸ Charles of Anjou, "Letter to Pierre of Montbrun, October 4, 1270," in Léopold Delisle, *Instructions adressées par le Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques aux correspondants du ministère de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts. Littérature latine et histoire du moyen âge* (Paris: Leroux, 1890), pp. 73–7.

invoking holy war did not prevent pragmatic accommodations across boundaries of faith. Al-Mustansir and Charles both sent soldiers into battle with the rhetoric of religious division ringing in their ears, while negotiating to end the conflict peacefully. This seemingly schizophrenic approach to the war met with predictably mixed responses among those who were compelled or had volunteered to fight it. Many crusaders called for rejecting peace in favor of sacking Tunis, an argument that sought to combine, or even elide, the material and spiritual motivations that underpinned crusading. Similarly, some Tunisians rejected the treaty in favor of continued resistance. Rather than consenting to an agreement that seemed to subordinate the *dar al-Islam* to a Christian power, these few people preferred to resist the invasion at all costs. The contradictions that seem to be in play here—the simultaneous affirmation and transgression of prevailing religious norms—only begin to break down once we recognize the stabilizing role that a mutual acknowledgement of religious differences could play.

The crusade consolidated existing religious allegiances, but with surprising results. Rather than causing chaos and division, the expedition's powerful affirmations of difference animated a complex network of Mediterranean political, economic, and religious interactions that thrived into the late thirteenth century. In the political sphere, the Hafsids, Mamluks, Franks, Angevins, and Aragonese maintained a balance of power through treaties that, by formalizing political relations across religious lines, recognized the distinct ambitions and right to existence of each state. In the economic sphere, commerce continued to depend on strict reciprocity of rights and responsibilities among Muslim, Christian, and Jewish merchants. In the religious sphere, Christians remained valued members of North African society precisely because they were not Muslims (and in fact were not encouraged to become Muslims), which meant that they could serve as intermediaries with the Christian Mediterranean, as ambassadors, translators, traders, and even soldiers. Far from driving a wedge between Christians and Muslims, the Tunis Crusade strengthened the religiously plural character of Hafsid society. The Mediterranean in the age of the last European crusader king was a world of many kinds of diversity. In a strange twist of history, the final war he waged to eliminate Islam helped that diversity to flourish long after he was gone.

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